THE

Hospital Pupil;

OR,

AN ESSAY

Intended to facilitate the Study of

MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

IN FOUR LETTERS.

I. ON THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY FOR A YOUTH INTENDED FOR THE PROFESSION OF MEDICINE OR SURGERY.

II. ON THE EDUCATION OF A MEDICAL STUDENT, IMPROVED COURSE OF HOSPITAL STUDIES, &c.

III. DIRECTIONS FOR THE PROSECUTION OF HOSPITAL STUDIES, ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF MEDICAL EDUCATION.

IV. HINTS ON ENTERING INTO PRACTICE, ON MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE, &c.

BY

JAMES PARKINSON.

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LETTER I.

ON THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY FOR A YOUTH INTENDED FOR THE PROFESSION OF MEDICINE OR SURGERY.

Topics.

Prefatory Observations.—Mental Abilities.—Want of Capacity.—Neglect of Education.—Want of sympathetic Tenderness.—Volatility of Disposition—Pecuniary Resources.—Professional Education not attainable by a trifling Expence—False Estimate of Parents, and the injurious consequences to Students.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HASTEN to comply with your request, by frankly giving you my opinion on the subject, which, with reason, so deeply interests you.

To withhold advice from a friend, when demanded, and when it may prove highly beneficial, is, not only to neglect the performance of one of the ordinary duties of man to man; but it is a refusal to yield to friendship one of its fairest claims. It is true, that

events of the most lamentable nature may be the consequence of adopting the opinion of the most judicious; and that notwithstanding advice may be delivered with the most delicate caution, yet some degree of responsibility will, though unjustly, weigh on him who may thus have striven to serve a friend.

Indeed should some distressful events, impossible to have been the subject of human foresight, follow the advice he has given, and manifest the fallibility of human judgment, he may, indeed, escape verbal reproach; yet will he, at least, be exposed to the mortification of beholding, that he has, though innocently, marked the brow of a friend with dejection and care. But are such offices of friendship to be therefore withheld?—Most certainly not. He, beyond a doubt, is the most valuable friend, who spares not himself, if the sacrifice be necessary for the man he esteems. Who, prizing the happiness of his friend beyond, even, the continuance of his friendship, scruples not to offer that advice, which

which, though proceeding from the best of intentions, may offend by its frankness: contented to exchange the esteem of his friend, for the pleasing assurance of having done all in his power to render him an essential service.

You wish me to say, whether I think the profession of medicine is eligible, or not, for your son, a youth who merits and possesses your ardent affection; and in whose happiness, I know, is closely interwoven your own.

An answer may indeed be easily evaded. A reluctance to bias the judgement in so important a concern, as where the future happiness of a child is at stake, might be expressed, with so much kind regard for his wellfare, that the actual failure in fulfilling the duties of friendship might be overlooked. But what must necessarily be my feelings, should you, in consequence of my omission, lay down that line of conduct for your son, which I could

have pointed out, as leading certainly to injury and disgrace; and, perhaps, even to ruin. What would be my reproaches should I, at some future period, behold him buffeted by the waves of adversity, with hardly strength to keep him from sinking, and know that a pusillanimous, self-saving wariness had prevented me from putting out the hand of friendship, which might have preserved him.

I might too, with the affectation of much modesty, plead my incompetency to determine on a question, comprising such a variety of considerations; but the affectation of ignorance is, at best, but a species of hypocrisy; and, when employed for the purpose of avoiding the communication of knowledge to others, marks a churlish and ungrateful misanthropy, which, I trust, will never inshrowd those dispositions of which I feel most proud.

Previously, however, to attempting to answer your question, some circumstances on which

which the answer must turn will require to be considered. The abilities, the disposition, and the education of your son, demand to be inquired into; since, if these be found unequal to what the profession requires, any farther consideration will be unnecessary. Some other points also demand serious attention before the required answer can be given.

When you reflect on the vast importance of the science of medicine to mankind, and on the mischiefs which may ensue from the errors of an ignorant practitioner, you cannot be disposed to place your son in the profession, unless you are confident he is equal to the arduous duty. You will, I trust, not think of placing him in a situation so loaded with most serious responsibility, unless you are satisfied, that his mental abilities are such as give a fair prospect of his obtaining those acquirements, by which he may be enabled to practice the art of healing, to the greatest extent of advantage, which the state of medical and chirurgical science will admit.

 Consider,

Consider, that if he does not manifest abilities, at least equal to other young people, the probability is, that his future attainments may be exceeding insignificant. Should you, in that case, from overweening fondness and partiality, or from want of consideration, choose for him a profession, the object of which is the restoration of health to mankind, know that, by his inability duly to execute its functions, he must become the cruel scourge of those who may unhappily place in him their confidence, and entrust him with the preservation of their dearest interests.

Suffer not then the wish to bring him up to, what may be esteemed, a genteel profession, to induce you to snatch him from some equally honourable and more appropriate calling, in which manual adroitness or steady plodding, may secure him prosperity, to heap on him duties which he may be unable to perform; and where, in proportion to his inability and consequent failures, the health, the happiness, nay,

nay the lives of those around him must be sacrificed.

Great allowances may, in general, be made to paternal fondness and pride, and to the laudable eagerness to place a child in a state of prosperity and respectability. But no excuse can be framed for a father, who, after having made the comparison, and found that the acquirements of a son are less than those of other youths, of similar ages and opportunities, will yet place him in a situation calling for the utmost abilities of man; and, in which, his deficiency of capacity must prove a dreadful source of calamities to those who may employ him.

To you I am well assured, that what has been already said, on this head, will be sufficient; but as I am induced to think, that the observations I make to you, may be published with some advantage to others, I will add two or three remarks, although convinced, that to you they are unnecessary. We will

suppose for a moment that a regard for the welfare of others is not sufficient to prevent a parent from thus disposing of a son, possessing but ordinary, or less than ordinary abilities. Let him then reflect on the miserable course of life he has destined his son to pursue. He strives, perhaps, with unremitting ardour, to benefit those who call on him for aid; but, from frequency of failure, he at last takes alarm, revises what is past, and judges it by the knowledge which daily experience brings him. His mind is perpetually stung by self-accusation; he perceives that, in spite of his utmost exertions, those calamities increase which it is his duty, and his most anxious wish, to diminish; and, with pain he discovers, that his endeavours are too frequently, not only unsuccessful, but even injurious. Can it be a matter of surprize then that he often finds himself agitated with most distressful doubts, as to the mode of conduct to be adopted, when a valuable life is at stake; and that he loads himself with reproaches for having, perhaps, augmented through ignorance,

those calamities which a man of more information might have entirely removed. Such must frequently be his tormenting reflections; but, as he dwells on the melancholy theme, he most probably will discover, that the parent, who to gratify a silly pride, placed before him the unequal task, in justice, merits the largest portion of reproach.

It must be evident, that much of what has been here said will apply, with equal force, where a youth, although possessing an excellent capacity, has unfortunately been neglected in the early part of his education. For on the advance he has hitherto made must depend, in a great measure, the celerity of his future progress, in acquiring the necessary knowledge of the various sciences which must soon engage his attention. It is true, that if the capacity of a youth be good, he may, by considerable industry, make up for the waste of time he has suffered; but the hours, thus employed, must be snatched from those which ought to be devoted, entirely, to the study of

those

those sciences which more particularly refer to the healing art, and which claim an undivided attention.

Thus should he not possess a knowledge of the Latin language, which may be considered as the universal language of science, he will soon perceive, that the want of it, as well as the endeavour to obtain it, will act as a heavy clog, during the prosecution of his studies. On the same grounds I must remark that a youth intended for the medical profession would experience much inconvenience and delay, from not having the principles of natural philosophy early impressed on his mind. It is true, indeed, that this science may form a part of his subsequent studies, but I wish to inforce that grand truth that natural philosophy is, as it were, the groundwork of all those sciences, which are to become the subjects of his study. Without this fundamental knowledge he will be unable to comprehend the language, even, in which physiology, anatomy, or chemistry describes those facts, which

should be so impressed on his mind, as to be always prompt in his memory.

A sympathetic concern, and a tender interest for the sufferings of others, ought to characterize all those who engage themselves in a profession, the object of which should be to mitigate or remove, one great portion of the calamities to which humanity is subject. For he, who can view the sufferings of a fellow-creature with unconcern, will, there is too much reason to fear, sometimes neglect the opportunities of administering the required relief: that relief which he could with ease bestow, and which he withholds only from his not feeling, with due force, the afflicting urgency of the claim, which is made on him.

In consideration of your own peace of mind, for the sake of him, whose soul is as dear to you as your own, and in the name of suffering humanity, I conjure you, should you perceive, that from some little error in his education,

cation, the mind of your son is narrowed—that the love of self faultily preponderates, and but few marks of feeling and kind sympathy show themselves, strive with unremitting zeal to correct so baneful a distemper of the mind; and be assured of your full success, before you make him a member of a profession, in the performing the common offices of which, self-love will frequently be called on to abandon those indulgences it enjoys with the greatest delight.

Parental fondness, it must be allowed, is too apt to promote an unsocial turn: to encourage a devotion to self-love, and to engraft the pernicious principle, that the grand and leading object of life's business is to sacrifice at the altar of this detestable idol. When this has been the case, and particularly, if it has been neglected to inculcate in infancy, the tenderness due to surrounding animals; and in youth the leading principle of Christianity, a narrow distorted mind will be the result, which makes no other's sorrows its own.

own. It knows not those exquisite sensations, which the benevolent feel, when they behold the pale and wan countenance which pain has shrunk up and withered, dilate with gratitude and delight on experiencing the comparative ecstacy, arising from the return of long lost ease.

Can he whose conduct is directed by a mind so framed, whose constant aim has been the self-appropriation of every blessing; and who, perhaps, contemplates the miseries of others only to heighten by comparison, the blessings, he himself possesses?—Can he, I ask, be expected to accomplish the arduous task of interposing, with anxious assiduity, between his fellow-creatures, and the host of calamities with which disease menaces them? I know your mind is with me on this occasion, and I am aware how little this can apply to your son; but, remember these words are not intended for him.

The observations which follow are those which, I think, may indeed be attended to by you, particularly, with some advantage. A warm heart and a lively disposition are sufficiently manifest in your son, displaying themselves in generous actions, and in manners so pleasing as to engage the affections of all who know him. But is not his chearfulness accompanied with too much levity; and may not this, if not timely removed, give to his appearance a semblance of frivolity, which must prove an immoveable bar to his future advancement? The morning, I know, may open with a sky filled with clouds of unfavourable appearance; but as the sun makes its way, these may disappear, and the whole day be enlivened by his chearful radiance: and thus will the little blemishes of a youthful mind vanish, as reason, the sun of intellect, assumes its dominion.

But the disposition of a youth is seldom so much changed, but that, by a careful atten-

tion, we may, with tolerable success, form to our minds his future character. Changes of situation, strenuous admonitions, and the early experience of the mischiefs of following the bent of a faulty disposition, may, sometimes indeed, effect a considerable change, and the volatile and giddy youth may become a serious young man; whilst, on the other hand, youths the most promising, may loosen their hold on prudence, and become slaves to the worst propensities. Instances of this kind are, however few, when compared with those, where, from youth to age, a similar disposition almost constantly direct the conduct.

This uniform tenure of disposition is more particularly observable in youths resembling your son, whose errors arise from mere thoughtlessness, and whose faults are those of unrestrained generosity, and of unlimited confidence in others. His failings are even amiable, and are, therefore, rather encouraged than checked, by the half-approving censures

censures of his friends. He consequently, as is the case with almost every youth of a free and lively temper, will retain his frank disposition and unguarded manners, until he discovers himself thereby rendered the butt for those who obtain the approbation of the world for their caution and prudence, but who, in fact, substitute for the one cunning, and for the other fraud.

I suspect you may accuse me, at first of a frivolous captiousness, when I say that I fear, a youth possessing a similar disposition, in a high degree, would be very unfit to be chosen for the profession of medicine. But consider, that when he has passed through his terms of study, in which he has employed himself with the proper degree of assiduity, he may manifest, with a brilliant genius, a temper of mind so prone to gaiety and hilarity, that on a superficial view he may be supposed to be the mere devot of pleasure, and therefore be suspected to possess but very limited professional acquirements.

It may be very true that, on an examination by those who are competent to judge, it might be discovered that his attainments were much greater, and much more solid, than those of the dull and most unremitting plodder. But those, by whom he will most generally be judged, the ignorant and the splenetic, will most probably consider as inconsistent levity, the mere habitual effervescence of good humour, or even the unfrequent relaxation from professional labours. Under such false impressions his merit will never be duly ascertained, and his utmost exertions will hardly obtain him daily bread; whilst the preference will be given to some one, whose solemn stupidity is mistaken for extraordinary sagacity; and who, perhaps, is himself surprised, at being thus able to supplant one whose abilities he regards with admiration and envy.

The pecuniary resources of a young man intended for the practice of medicine and surgery is, as much as in any other situation of life whatever, an object requiring serious consideration.

sideration. Parents are often influenced, by a most injurious delusion, whilst choosing a situation, in which a son is to obtain a livelihood. They look forward to the period at which a young man is to endeavour to establish himself in the world; and they calculate what then may be the claims made on them, to furnish him with the means of pursuing his intended calling. They find that the capital required by most dealers and tradesmen is considerable, and such as they would supply with difficulty: but that on the other hand a profession appears to demand no stock in trade at all. Extraordinary merit, it appears to them, cannot fail to make its way; and this, the only capital they suppose necessary, is surely, they imagine, obtainable by industrious exertions. By choosing for him, therefore, a profession, instead of a trade, the father considers that, he not only avoids the requisition of a sum he should not be able to raise; but that he nevertheless places his son in a situation, where, if he have but the inclination, he may with ease become prosperous and respectable.

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This calculation, however, turns out frequently egregiously wrong. The leading idea is delusive and flattering; but many circumstances of very considerable importance are omitted to be reckoned upon, and no allowance is made for the difficulty and expence, with which any species of professional knowledge is obtained—of course a false estimate is made. The young man is therefore fixed in some genteel profession. He is told that industrious study and observation are the only requisites—that, by an assiduous attention, he cannot fail of becoming successful, perhaps eminent,—perhaps the very head of his profession. Examples are not kept back of extraordinary elevation by great professional acquirements. Men originally of the humblest means have thus succeeded—Why may not he?—The son of a butcher became Chancellor of England.

Such arguments are sure to influence the youthful mind, and the young man, with his expectations thus heightened, commences his course. But unhappily it too generally turns

out, that however considerable may be the powers of his mind, and however assiduous and industrious he may have been, yet he will soon find himself left far behind, by those who possess but moderate capacities, and who are much less assiduous in their application to study. Mortified at finding himself thus distanced, he exerts himself to the utmost; but still finding himself unable to come near to others in his attainments, he either relinquishes the profession in disgust; or, if he still follows it, being his only chance for a livelihood, it is with abated ardor, and the ambition of excelling nearly extinguished.

Not aware of all the benefits derivable from the source, from which their advantages have proceeded, he accuses himself of stupidity; but still wonders at finding the capacities of those whom he has, perhaps, estimated cheaply, to have so far exceeded his own. But the truth is, that the contest has not been fair; since they have always had the 'vantage ground. They have had the means of obtaining

taining the guiding aid of some well-learned tutor, who has directed their labours; who has not only pointed out the proper subjects of study, but even the order in which those subjects are to be taken; who, in a word, has taught them where they might reap the richest harvest; and has shewn them how best to separate the chaff from the grain. Thus aided, every moment of their study has been successfully employed; and their mind has become stored with sound and useful knowledge. But it has not been so with him, who has been bound to wander alone through the wilds of science. Unable to distinguish the noxious from the salubrious plant, what he collects is but of little worth; and, ignorant of the several objects which come before him, he dwells on those, perhaps, which are least worthy of his attention. After years of close, but ill-conducted study, he discovers he has founded his knowledge on principles which the better informed have rejected, and has stored in his mind doctrines which it is absolutely necessary he should unlearn.

But let us, on the other side, suppose that favourable circumstances have arisen, that his exertions have been properly directed, that his attainments far exceed those which others possess, and that he eagerly sets about obtaining the reward of his toils, an establishment in his profession; what will be his fate, unless his pecuniary resources are sufficient? ——To pine neglected, supported only by the consciousness of meriting a better fate. He, on the other hand, who has the command of a full purse, and who, just for argument sake, we will suppose may not have a tythe of the knowledge which the other possesses, engages in the business of the profession, with a strong, and indeed reasonable assurance of success.

The one, who has gained the greatest portion of knowledge, is timid and diffident, from the consciousness of how much he has yet to learn: whilst the other is confident from ignorance, not supposing there to be knowledge beyond what

what he possesses: for he who mounts the hill of science beholds the view of countries, he has yet to explore, expand around him at every step; but he that grovels below, believes that all that is worth attending to is comprised in the murky valley in which he dwells.

The diffidence of the one, joined with perhaps the awkwardnesses of a man of study, and the depression proceeding from the neglect of the world, always keeps him back: he seldom is noticed but by those who draw, from his unassuming manners, conclusions of an unfavourable nature; imputing to ignorance that which proceeds from real knowledge, combined with modesty. The confidence of the other, aided by those manners which much intercourse with the busy world creates, will draw a favourable attention, and induce the multitude to believe him to be fully in possession of that professional knowledge, in which he is so miserably deficient.

Thus you see whether in the prosecution of his studies, or in the subsequent exercise of his profession, the want of tolerably ample pecuniary resources will throw in his way such obstacles, as there will be but little chance of his best exertions being able to remove. You are also, I hope, convinced, that it is a debt due, not only to your son, but to the circle in which he may move, that his capacity, his education, and his disposition be fully enquired into and approved, before it is determined to place him in a profession, in which, if he fail, it is at the expence of the health and happiness of those around him.

I am yours,

LETTER II.

ON THE EDUCATION OF A YOUTH INTENDED FOR THE PROFESSIONS OF PHYSIC AND SURGERY.

Topics.

Present Mode.—Objections.—Universities.—Plan of Education proposed.—Languages.—Anatomy the Alphabet of Medical Knowledge.—Natural Philosophy.—Chemistry.—Drawing.—Short-hand Notes.—Botany, &c.—Hospital Attendance.—Advantages of the proposed Order of Studies.

I AM pleased to find, as you and your son are both so anxious for his becoming a member of the medical profession, that you are convinced he possesses those qualifications, which I deem essential to a young man in that walk of life. You now request of me to point out the peculiar branch of the profession, which I believe to be the most eligible for him; and, to advise you as to the kind of situation, in which you may place him, with the greatest probability of his making the necessary proficiency.—You inform me, that the fortune you

you can allow him is far from being a competence; that it may indeed assist him while establishing a business, but that it cannot be relied on any farther. This obliges me to remark, that, by that circumstance, I think he must be excluded from all thoughts of exercising, either the practice of physick or of surgery alone. I need hardly repeat to you the vulgar observation, that a physician seldom obtains bread by his profession, until he has no teeth left to eat it. You must have observed how late it is before a physician gets into full practice; and that few of them begin to derive any advantage from their profession, until they have attained that time of life, at which men engaged in business, or mercantile concerns, have generally acquired a handsome fortune. Indeed it almost seems, that many think a physician too young for consultation, unless he has reached his dotage: I have myself known a physician, above fifty years of age, objected to for his youth.

Surgeons, it is true, fare not so ill in this respect; but those who rely on the practice of surgery alone, will find that their first establishment must be the result of connections, formed with young men of expensive manners, and indeed of debauched morals. The forming of such connections, it is to be feared, may not be accomplished without the waste of property, of time, and perhaps of health; nor is it a fear void of foundation, that modes of living, thus almost necessarily adopted, may become so endeared by habit, as not afterwards to be shaken off. The risque of this must, unhappily, be often run; but even this cannot be done, without such an income as will support this mode of life, for a considerable time, with but little aid from professional fees.

The practice of physic, or of surgery, alone, I think must therefore appear to you as not fit for your son; unless you had it in your power to place him rather nearer to independence. My advice, therefore, shall be given,

given, on the supposition that he is intended to practice both branches of the profession; a circumstance which will be particularly convenient to me, as I purpose publishing the thoughts I have thrown together on this occasion, since a very considerable majority of those, into whose hands these lines may fall, will be those who are intended to fill, exactly, the same situation, which I now find it necessary to recommend to your son; and, to them, its comprehending observations referring, both to medicine and surgery, cannot but render it more acceptable.

The grand object which next calls for consideration, is what is the best situation in which a youth can be placed; and what is the mode of study, which will most certainly secure him all the theoretical and practical knowledge, in the science of healing, which, in the present state of the science, can be communicated.

According to the present system, the first care of a parent, who has a son whom he intends

tends shall be educated in both branches of the healing art, is to find out some gentleman of respectability who is properly established as a surgeon and apothecary. With him, paying a proper premium, he fixes his son, who has received a common school education, as an apprentice for seven years. At the end of this period he is, in general, sent to one of the hospitals in the metropolis, where he attends the lectures, and witnesses the practice of the hospital for a twelvemonth, or even less time: and, then if a favourable opportunity offers, takes charge of the health of some populous neighbourhood.

Now, on full conviction, I assert, that of all the modes which could be devised for a medical and chirurgical education, this is the most absurd: and is the one which would most certainly exclude a young man from the chance of acquiring that knowledge, which the important situation he is about to fill, so imperiously demands.

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When I consider, that this has been the plan of education adopted, for many of those gentlemen who with so much credit to themselves, and advantage to their employers practise both branches of the profession, in every part of the country; and that it is the mode of education which is still almost universally adopted, I cannot but be thoroughly aware, of the consequences of the assertion I make. It is, indeed, much more calculated to provoke contradiction, than to obtain assent. This consideration does not, however, prevent its being hazarded; nor should it, since the opposition, I expect it may experience, will point out the great number of those who think differently from me, and who require, I venture to believe, to be freed from the delusions of a mischievous error.

Previously, however, to endeavouring to prove the truth of my assertion, I must notice one apparent objection, which stands prominently observable in the statement I have even just made. I allude to the fact I have myself

admitted

admitted, that the majority of practitioners in physic and surgery, to whom I appear willing to admit the possession of useful abilities, have received their education, exactly in the manner, and on the plan, against which I propose to offer objections. This seeming contradiction I think necessary to explain at once; lest it should weigh on your mind, and influence your judgment, whilst attending to the remarks which are to follow.—A moment's reflection will, however, be enough to show you that, because men, by intense application, and aided by excellent capacities, have been able to make head against a host of obstacles, which a certain system of education presents; and have made that progress, in knowledge, which has enabled them to become useful to their fellow-creatures, in a certain degree, we are not bound to conclude that their system of education was faultless, or that their knowledge might not have been much more considerable, and their sphere of utility much more extended.

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To put the subject in a fair point of view, it will be proper first to take a glimpse of the manner, in which the days of a young man, thus disposed of, is spent; and then a fair estimation may be taken, of the advantages and disadvantages which belong to this mode of communicating instruction.

The first four or five years are almost entirely appropriated to the compounding of medicines; the art of which, with every habit of necessary exactness, might be just as well obtained in as many months. The remaining years of his apprenticeship bring with them the acquisition of the art of bleeding, of dressing a blister, and, for the completion of the climax—of exhibiting an enema. If he be blest with a mind so alert, that even this situation, so ill calculated to call it into action, cannot render it torpid, he seizes every opportunity of gaining information, he peruses and reperuses the dispensatory, studies some obsolete practice of medicine, and doses over some treatise in physiology. Unknowing

from

from actual inspection the form, structure, and situation of the several parts of the human body, his ideas of anatomy cannot but be exceedingly incorrect: physiological facts will be hardly within his comprehension, and his ideas respecting the treatment of diseases must be almost purely empirical.

With their minds thus rudely cultivated, it must be acknowledged, that many young men are sent to the hospitals in the metropolis; where, in consequence of the previous mismanagement of their education, the plan of instruction, so well contrived, loses all its advantages, and appears, with respect to such students, to be fraught with equal absurdity with that which preceded it.

To determine how far this assertion corresponds with truth, we will take a view of the more common arrangement for hospital education; and observe how much it is likely to improve those for whose benefit it is in-

tended. For a certain premium, pupils are admitted, for six or twelve months, some for a longer time, but the majority I believe only for the period I mentioned. These, according to the premium paid, either only *walk* the hospital, and benefit themselves by the observations they thus have the opportunity to make; or they take on themselves the situation of *dressers*, becoming assistants to the surgeons of the hospital, dressing wounds, reducing fractures, and performing several of the lesser operations of surgery, under their direction. At the same time they have the opportunity of attending the several lectures on anatomy, physiology, medicine, surgery, chemistry, &c. Indeed the opportunities of information are here so great as to authorise me to describe them, as constituting the first schools of practical medicine in the world; and such as would, undoubtedly, secure the providing of intelligent and able practitioners for the several parts of the country, were but a due regard paid to their being employed in the most advantageous

advantageous order and mode. But this is far from being the case, as will appear from the farther examination of the progress of the pupil.

A young man, such as I have already described, at the expiration of his apprenticeship, or soon after, enters himself as a pupil of an hospital; and as anxious, perhaps, to fulfil the period of his pupillage, as he was to accomplish the term he has just finished, he commences, at the same time, to attend the several lectures, and to act as a dresser. But when, as it must often happen, from the misdirection of his earlier studies, of which I have just complained, he begins his course of observation, or of dressing, with but a slight knowledge of anatomy and of the first principles of medicine and surgery, it must be evident that he must be incompetent to derive the full advantages which these opportunities offer to him.

A knowledge of anatomy ought to precede even the study of surgery, and it is equally

certain, that the principles of surgery, as a science, ought to be indelibly impressed on the mind, before any attempt should be made to employ it as an art. But the study of anatomy embraces so many interesting objects, and the different parts of the animal system, with the structures, situations, and offices of which the student is required to be acquainted, are so numerous and so various, that so much anatomical knowledge as is required even for the making of the necessary observations on hospital practice, or for anatomical investigation by dissection—or for understanding lectures on surgery, cannot be gained, even by the diligent, until a complete course of anatomical lectures has been attended to. This will require three months of their time, and the less diligent will not be rendered competent under less than two courses.

Thus it appears, that a fourth part of this most precious opportunity for observation is passed through, in a futile and inefficient mode of study; that, in some instances, half the period

riod is thus injudiciously wasted; and that where the student is limited to a short term of hospital practice, and does not possess extraordinary abilities and industry, the whole of that period, on which his future prosperity, and his ease of conscience, must depend, slides away, only furnishing him with a knowledge of the multiplicity of subjects, of which, though he is convinced they are absolutely necessary to be known, he is miserably ignorant.

From what I have here, without exaggeration, stated, do you not perceive that a young man who is placed behind the counter of an apothecary, for seven years, and receives his hospital education, in the manner I have described, must be robbed of his fair chance of becoming a proficient in his profession; and be too likely to enter upon the exercise of it, without being in possession of the degree of knowledge, necessary for the due performance of the duties of so important a station?

Having thus, I hope, convinced you, that the ordinary mode of instruction ought not to be adopted for your son, you have some claim to know, from me, what mode may, with most advantage to him, be substituted for that to which I so earnestly object. This is, indeed, the most arduous part of the task, and which, although performed to the best of my judgment, may be too likely to prove, in some respects, faulty. Convinced, however, that it is preferable to that which I know you are disposed to adopt, I will lay it before you, to enable you to make the comparison and form your judgment.

Your son being of a fit age for apprenticeship, as you inform me, I suppose him to be about fourteen or fifteen years old. He has made, you inform me, a tolerable progress in his education at school, but not, you believe, to such an extent as you wish. To make good this deficiency I conceive should be the first business; but, in determining the best mode

mode of doing this, we must be under the necessity of agitating an important question, whether, as an apothecary's shop is out of the question, his classical and literary acquirements should be derived from an university or a private tutor. You, I suspect, may think the discussion of this question entirely unnecessary, conceiving that as your son is not intended to be a physician, an university cannot be required for him. But, my dear Sir, I beg you to consider that the liberal education of a physician cannot injure an apothecary; but that, in that situation, all the knowledge he can possibly attain may frequently be required to be called into exertion.

In an university he will have the opportunity not only of completing his classical knowledge, but of studying all the other sciences which, from their intimate connection with medicine, must form a part of his studies. These he will here study in that systematic order and mode which must furnish him with

the most correct ideas, and which must leave the strongest impression on his mind. Here, by the constant association with men of learning, and with those engaged in the same pursuits with himself, such a spirit of emulation will be excited, and such habits of attention and enquiry generated, as must considerably accelerate his progress.

On the other hand I am obliged to acknowledge, that except the university to which he be sent possesses the advantages of an actual school of anatomy (a well furnished dissecting room), and a neighbouring hospital, I should be obliged to concede that his education would here prove very deficient, in some of its most material points.

Consider, that as the knowledge of the structure of a machine should be understood before any attempt can be made to repair its defects; so should anatomical knowledge precede, not only the attempt to remove the disorders

orders of the animal system; but even the attempt to understand the various causes, on which those disorders may depend.

Again, as repeated observations are necessary to enable any one to ascertain by what particular failure the functions of a machine are interrupted, or to know in what particular part of the machine the fault exists; so constant attention to disease is absolutely necessary to point out the particular malady which various symptoms mark, as well as the several remedial means which they indicate. Without the means, therefore, of obtaining full anatomical, and clinical instruction, the first universities, however rich in the exclusive collegiate honours and privileges, they hold in store for their sons, can be but imperfect as schools of medicine. At the same time remember, it is fully my opinion, that an university, possessing these indispensible requisites, offers those opportunities for a student, which are hardly to be compensated in any other situation in which he may be placed.

You

You informed me, that, however disposed you may be, in every other respect, to follow the advice I may give, you cannot, from very particular reasons, agree that your son should go to an university. I need, therefore, say no more respecting the education he would there obtain: and, as by far the greater number of my readers will be those who, from various reasons, are prevented from adopting this species of education, I shall proceed to point out that which appears to me, to approach the nearest to it in respect to utility.

From your describing your son to be of an age fit for apprenticeship, as I have already remarked, and from the remembrance I retain of him, I suppose him to be about fourteen or fifteen years of age. The plan which I shall propose will, therefore, be such as I think may be commenced by a youth of that age.

The knowledge of ANATOMY being necessary, I am convinced, to be attained directly, he should, therefore, as soon as possible, engage

gage himself in a course of anatomical lectures. My friend, I know you well, and therefore, without any violent stretch of imagination, can fancy that you, as well as many others who may read this passage, will exclaim —what! attend a course of anatomical lectures at fourteen years of age! But a little attention will, I trust, evince the propriety of recommendation.

Let it be considered that anatomy is the very alphabet of physiology, which teaches the knowledge of the animal œconomy; and that, by anatomy alone, we learn the natural state of parts, as well as the changes produced by disease, the removal of which will be so much the object of his future endeavours. An early knowledge of anatomy must, therefore, be obtained; but as three or four months must now elapse before any course of anatomical lectures commences, let the intermediate time be employed in rendering his knowledge of the *Latin* and *Greek* more perfect; but particularly of the former.

He

He also should, if he has not done it already, acquire the *art of short-hand writing* and of *drawing*. The advantages derivable from the former are obvious, nor are those of the latter much less considerable; since, by copying anatomical plates and drawings, he will acquire more quickly, and exactly, the ideas of the form and situation of parts, and will thereby have the progress of his knowledge in anatomy much accelerated. He will, at the same time, by these exercises in drawing, so far improve himself in the art, as to be enabled to make copies of such curious preparations, or of such diseased parts, as offer appearances so uncommon, or so peculiarly illustrative, as to demand preservation.

He should, at this period also, read some elementary treatise on anatomy; such as Dr. Hooper's Anatomical Pocket-book, since he will thereby gain some information respecting those parts on the depicting of which his pencil is exercised; at the same time, that it will

be to him as a nomenclature, teaching him the meaning of the various terms used in the science. He may also employ himself, at times, in obtaining some general knowledge, of the several branches of NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

By a sedulous application he will thus render himself capable not only of comprehending the language of a lecturer; but also of better accompanying the lecturer, in the description of the various parts of the human body, and of their several offices. As soon as the opportunity presents, he should commence his attendance on anatomical lectures; but not without having impressed on his mind, that his future progress in his studies depends on his present vigilance and attention. Those hours which his lectures do not engage should be employed in tracing over the parts which have been the subject of the preceding lecture, in some anatomical work, such as Winslow's System of Anatomy; or, in some accurately drawn plates, such as those of Albinus, Eustachius,

Eustachius, &c. by occasionally copying of which he will now much accelerate the obtaining of anatomical knowledge. In this manner, with two courses of lectures, he should pass the winter.

In the season which intervenes, between this period and the next winter course of lectures, he may be employed in the reading of some system of anatomy, as well as of physiology, written in Latin, such as the *Prælectiones Anatomicæ* of Leber, and the *Primæ Lineæ Physiologiæ* of Haller; by doing this he will keep up, at the same time, his anatomical knowledge and his acquaintance with the Latin.

He should now, also, endeavour to acquire a more correct knowledge of the principles of NATURAL PHILOSOPHY. At least he must obtain a knowledge of the general properties of matter; since without this he cannot comprehend the elementary principles of physiology. A knowledge of the laws by which bodies in motion

motion are influenced; and of the effects of the mechanical powers, will be necessary to enable him fully to understand and admire the wisdom, displayed in the fabrication of the skeleton, or frame-work of man. Nor without this knowledge will he be able to discover the wonderful contrivance displayed in the muscular system; in the insertions of the several muscles; in their arrangement, positions, &c. The properties of light and the laws of its refraction, &c. are absolutely necessary to be known before he studies vision, and the curious adaptation of parts displayed in the fabric of the eye, that most perfect of all optical instruments. The necessity of being informed respecting the general properties of fluids, to enable him the better to comprehend those of the circulating fluids in the animal body, must be evident: and not less obvious must be the necessity of acquiring an acquaintance with the general properties of the air, before he attempts to comprehend the office of the lungs, and the process of respiration. Should he, after acquiring the know-

ledge

ledge these several sciences will convey, still have some time to spare before the commencement of his second term of lectures, he may endeavour to obtain, at least, so much chemical instruction as shall teach him the composition of the atmospheric air; and enable him to know how much the very existence of the animal system depends on the due proportion of its constituent parts. He, most probably, already possesses a moderate knowledge of the *French language*; this he will do well to increase by translating, as occasions offer, some scientific work written in that language, into English. Should he also have the time and opportunity, he should endeavour to obtain such a knowledge of the *German* as will enable him to read, with a tolerable degree of facility, a scientific work written in that language.

With his next courses of anatomical lectures should be combined lectures on PHYSIOLOGY. These, from the anatomical information he has now gained, and from the studies which

which have lately employed him; he will now be able to understand, sufficiently to secure his attention, and to excite that interest which is due to a science, the knowledge of which is of so much consequence to him. During his attendance on the first course of this second set of anatomical lectures, he should, at the latest, commence the exercise of PRACTICAL ANATOMY. If this be properly attended to, and a due portion of the hours, not employed in dissection and lectures, be given to revising and copying the short-hand notes of the physiological lectures, his time will be fairly, and I doubt not successfully, employed.

You will, perhaps, wonder that I have not, until now, spoken of the use of SHORT-HAND NOTES; but the reason is, that during anatomical demonstration, and especially during a first, or even a second course of lectures, an eagerness to take notes, may, instead of an advantage, prove a considerable impediment. The intention of anatomical

studies is, to impress on the mind strong and faithful representations of the form, situation, and structure, of the various parts which constitute the animal machine. To yield a chance of this being accomplished, no other work should be obtruded on the eye, than to steadily contemplate the subject which is placed before it; attentively listening, at the same time, to the explanations of the lecture. This, at least to as young an anatomist as your son, will, I think, be as much as ought to be attempted, during his two first courses of lectures. Afterwards, the taking of occasional notes may be exceedingly proper, such as those which are proposed to mark any observation, particularly deserving of future attention; or, such as, not being understood at the moment, may require revision, and comparison with the accounts respecting it, given by some respectable author. During the lectures on physiology, and those which are to succeed on chemistry, natural philosophy, &c. the taking of notes will be highly useful, since it secures the mind from straying to other subjects, impresses

presses the words of the lecturer much more strongly on the mind, and yields the opportunity of revising them at a distant period.

Having thus completed his second season, his mind will have now become well furnished with fundamental knowledge; and his summer course of studies may be of course widened. His reading will now be extended to the more voluminous works of Haller, Monro, &c. by which, with occasional reference to his notes, and the exercise of his pencil, his anatomical and physiological attainments will be considerably increased. He will now read some compendium of modern CHEMISTRY, perhaps the one which I have published for the use of students may be as proper as most, or should he choose a larger work, the Principles of Chemistry, by Dr. Gren, is recommendable.

The other branches of natural philosophy must now be again earnestly attended to; and, if possible, the knowledge of them should be ac-

celerated, by the happy illustration which will be yielded, by a course of lectures and exhibition of experiments.

During this period he may also impress on his mind, so strongly as to be prompt to his recollection, the generic characters, at least, of disease, from the Nosology of Cullen. After this he may read, with advantage, the First Lines of the Practice of Physic, by the same celebrated writer. Some systematic treatise of surgery may now also engage his attention: and he should likewise obtain some knowledge of the MATERIA MEDICA.

He will now be prepared to resume his winter course of studies, which must now comprise two courses of lectures on CHEMISTRY, on the PRACTICE OF PHYSIC, and on the PRACTICE OF SURGERY, and a continuance of anatomical lectures and dissections.

His third term being thus filled up, and completed; he will be found qualified to attend

attend to the demonstration of the nature of disease, and the effects of medicines, in CLINICAL LECTURES; he will now also be enabled to derive considerable advantage by attending the hospital as an attentive observer.

By thus walking the hospital he will see, every moment, some point illustrated, some doctrine confirmed, or some rule of practice established; at the same time, almost every occurrence will serve to deepen the impressions of those ideas, which it has been the endeavour of his teachers to imprint on his mind. Appropriate reading must, at the same time, be had recourse to, with eager attention; but I forbear to speak here of the choice of the books to which his mind must be directed, since that will, with more propriety and judgment, be done in the respective lectures.

The hours of relaxation from severer studies may be usefully, and pleasingly employed,

in the study of BOTANY, and in attending to the medicinal virtues of the various plants with which the God of nature adorns and enriches the face of the earth.

The fourth winter now arrives, bringing with it the opportunity of prosecuting the same studies, with the additional advantage of increased eagerness and attention; the knowledge already gained, having still farther excited the desire to learn.

MORBID ANATOMY must now rank among his studies; being pretty well acquainted with the natural appearances of the several parts of the human body, and with the symptoms, as well as the proximate causes of the several diseases, he will be enabled to mark the ravages which diseases make, to trace them in their progress; and to obtain more correct ideas respecting the *diagnosis*, the *prognosis*, and of even the mode of cure of various diseases.

At

At the conclusion of this winter his acquisitions will be such that he will be fully capable of undertaking the office of dressing pupil; continuing, at the same time, a strict attention to clinical instructions, without which he can never possess that accurate knowledge of disease, on which, alone, can be founded hopes for a successful exercise of the healing art.

To derive the fair advantages which this situation may afford, he should, at least, retain it for twelve months, in which time, the opportunities for useful observations, must exceed those which would be yielded, by almost any private practice in as many years.

During the last six months of this period, he will be enabled to attend any course of lectures, which inclination, or a sense of deficiency may point out. The knowledge he has acquired will have convinced him of its importance, and will render him eager to derive all the advantages he can from anatomical demonstra-

tion. The lectures of anatomy he will, therefore, be anxious to attend to this season also.

But, perhaps, you think these might be omitted, and this too, on the same ground, that you may object to the whole plan, that it appears to you too expensive. To which I should answer, that the whole expence, including his support, would not very much exceed that which you would suffer in paying a premium to a man of respectability; and in making up the deficiencies of his education, at the termination of his apprenticeship.

Besides, make a comparison of the advantages which belong to each mode, and you will their discover, that an apprenticeship, except to an hospital-surgeon, possesses, comparatively, none; you will also discover, that, by the other, each science being learnt in its due order, is more perfectly acquired; and not only that the sciences which are first learnt render the following ones more easy of acquisition; but that, these acting; as

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it were, by a reflex operation, by calling into exercise those first learnt, give the mind a fresh and stronger hold on them.

But the grand point to which I must draw your attention is, that a young man who has served an apprenticeship, to an apothecary and surgeon, will require that which his friends will be seldom disposed to allow him—three seasons of lectures; and, at least, half as long attendance on an hospital, before he can be duly qualified. This must, of necessity, bring him to the age of four-and-twenty, when his attainments, in all probability, would not exceed those of a youth at nineteen, whose education has been arranged in the mode I have described.

Thus, with no more expence, four or five years advance in knowledge would be obtained; the advantage of which, through life, must be immeasurable. In a word, I am confident that, for a young man intended to practice both professions, no apprenticeship

will be adviseable, except to an hospital; and, that the advantages of attaching him to an hospital, even in the manner I have proposed, are incalculable.

LETTER

LETTER III.

ON THE BEST MEANS OF OBTAINING INSTRUCTION, BY A PUPIL ATTENDING AN HOSPITAL, IN THE CUSTOMARY MODE.

Topics.

Moral Conduct.—Pleasure, its Interference with Study.—Courage.—Industry.—Short-hand Notes.—Order of Study.—Importance of Practical Anatomy. Nosology.—Symptomatology.—Partiality of Attention to Operations.—Clinical Lectures.—Chemistry.—Natural Philosophy.—Multiplicity of Studies.—Correction of those States of the Mind inimical to Study.—Lectures of one Season insufficient.—Midwifery.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

AFTER a very long silence, of not less than seven years, I the other day received a letter from your worthy father. As is often the case, he acknowledges the commission of one fault to excuse him for the commission of a less; he says nothing would hardly have prevented the continuance of our correspondence, but the consciousness of having acted wrong by me; in having, after giving me so much trouble, adopted a mode of education

education for you, not merely different from that I recommended, but exactly that, the disadvantages which I had endeavoured to display.

I am sorry that this circumstance should have occasioned a suspension of our correspondence; and particularly so, since, from certain difficulties I have, myself, had to surmount, I had been rendered capable of aiding you in the progress of your studies, by a few, not unimportant hints. That opportunity is, however, now offered me; and depend on it I embrace it with the utmost readiness, and with the most eager zeal for your welfare and prosperity.

Persuaded by the remonstrances of his neighbour, Mr. ——, who, I know, has a larger portion of business than the neighbouring medical gentlemen, and, actuated by no small regard to old customs, he informs me that he placed you apprentice to his neighbour; that your period of apprenticeship is just

just expired, and that you, far from satisfied with your professional acquirements, are now arrived at London, for the purpose of completing your medical and chirurgical education, by a twelvemonth's attendance at an hospital, and on all the lectures which that period will enable you to attend. He intreats me, therefore, to address to you such advice as I think may at all benefit you—a request which requires not to be made a second time.

Should I, my young friend, appear to adopt too much of the gravity of age, and even seem to go beyond the line appointed me; and assume the language of a guardian of morals, impute it to my zeal for you, and to my eagerness of accomplishing, to the best of my power, the task I have undertaken. But be assured that I do not propose to moralize unnecessarily, or any farther than I think may prevent the adoption of such habits, as may considerably interfere with a due attention to your studies, at a period so momentous. Indeed, so much do I think may depend on your conduct,

conduct, in this respect, that I must take the liberty with you, of making this part of my counsel precede all else I have to say.

The change you have experienced cannot but be very considerable; and I must add, highly dangerous to any young man not able to exert a very large portion of self-denial. You have left a situation where, from the form and regularity which directed the family, you must have been under much restraint; but now you suffer no other checks than those which arise from your own sense of propriety. Whilst with Mr. —— you associated, indeed, with those with whom he associated, and shared with the family in their domestic amusements. But it is much to be suspected, that the pleasures there intended you were not of that cast, likely to satisfy the wishes of a young man of a lively turn. In London, on the contrary, amusements will attract you at every turn; public spectacles, feasts, balls, and assemblies will daily hold out their temptations; and pleasure, under every fascinating form,

form, will seek to secure you in her snares. Your constant associates, induced by a fondness for your company, will too frequently employ every artifice to inveigle you into a participation of their amusements. Happy will it be for you, and truly praise-worthy will you deserve to be esteemed, if prudent considerations induce you but moderately to share in such indulgences; and heartily shall I rejoice, if ought I say should have the effect of repressing those inclinations which may arise and prompt you, in opposition to your better judgment.

Bear, however, in remembrance, that I am not here pretending to deliver a judgment on the propriety, or impropriety of these pleasures, in themselves; but merely so far as respects the inroads they must make on the most precious time, and their interference with occupations so truly important. Consider, that in these few months you must possess yourself of that knowledge, on the acquisition of which your future fortune, and peace of mind,

and the happiness—nay lives, of many around you may depend: then you will, doubtless, regard your faithful attention to your studies, not as a point on which your choice should be exercised, but as a sacred duty enjoined by conscience; a breach of which cannot be committed, without failing in your duty both to God and man. You are, I am satisfied, sufficiently awake to such considerations to feel, fully, the force of what I here address to you; indeed, I do not fear your want of coincidence of opinion on this point, nor do I doubt but you will form the best of determinations.

Still farther am I from apprehending profligacy and debauchery from you; I am only anxious to guard you against that great waste of time, which proceeds from the small, but frequent deviations, from that course of studies which a student has proposed to himself. You may depend on it, if these are not guarded against, your twelve months will slip by you unprofitably, and you will perceive, with wonder and regret, that you have not made

that

that progress in knowledge which you expected; and which, indeed, every one would have supposed, that time, and those opportunities you have enjoyed, must have enabled you to have made.

To prevent this, your first care must be of the intimacies you contract with your fellow-students; before these are formed, be assured that the habits of those you are disposed to unite with are young men whose habits are congenial, with that course which your good judgment has determined you to adopt. One intimacy with any one of a contrary disposition will be sufficient to derange your whole plan; his opportunities of interference will be so frequent, and unexpected; and his proposals may appear to be so harmless, and likely to interfere so little with your arrangements; that you may not discover the injury he has done you, until your studies are so broken into, that you find it hardly in your power to repair the mischief. Nor does the injury proceed, merely from the almost imperceptible

frequency of these interruptions, but from the injury resulting from each interruption extending, beyond all expectation.

Let me illustrate what I have here laboured to express, by familiarly describing a situation to which you may be frequently exposed; with the ill consequences which may ensue from a want of resolution to act as prudence dictates. An associate invites you to accompany him to the play; but you, knowing that you have some evening lecture to attend, with prudence beg to be excused, stating your wish not to lose the lecture, as it is on a subject, respecting which you are anxious to obtain information: besides you wish not to omit taking notes of each lecture regularly. Your objection is opposed, by the observation, that "you really make too much of a slave of yourself—you must have some little amusement, besides our friend, here will promise you the loan of his notes of the lecture; and we shall return home from the play directly."—Thus, if not sufficiently guarded, are you enticed

ticed into the party; and when you arrive at the play-house are, probably, joined by the friend on the loan of whose notes you depended. The evening passes pleasantly, and cannot be concluded without a bit of supper, and a glass of wine. The glass circulates freely, until the conviviality of the evening is such as, to render your attendance at any of the morning lectures impossible. Your head aches, and your spirits are low, you therefore trust to a friend for the notes of the evening lecture; but these are not so intelligible as your own, and even his revised notes are, perhaps, not so satisfactory as you wish. Thus three or four lectures are lost to you, the connection of your notes is interrupted, and your intended set of manuscript lectures are rendered imperfect; you, therefore, are disappointed in gratifying your laudable pride of acquiring, during this course, a complete set of notes of the different lectures. The accomplishing of this design is, therefore, probably, deferred, until the next course; and too often will this idea of postponement, when

once admitted, warp your resolutions of industry, and influence your determinations, when exposed to similar invitations. Inclination will prompt you to say—well, this is but the firs set of lectures, I will snatch what instruction I can from them; but they are already broken into, another evening or two will not make much difference; and next course shall experience no interruption. But, unhappily, habits of pleasure are soon formed, and with difficulty destroyed; and such connections as are made, during these parties, are too likely to become further incitements to similar indulgences; hence there will exist but little probability that the subsequent courses will be better attended than the first.

Thus, my young friend, you will perceive that those little deviations which, in themselves, can only be objected to by a very strict system of morality, may very likely become powerfully subversive of those excellent principles of conduct, which your judgment, and the goodness of your disposition would, I am sure, incline

cline you to adopt. Thus too, my young friend, you will, I trust, perceive that I am not disposed to trouble you with impertinently moralizing; but that I interfere only with that which appears to me to be likely to affect the progress of your studies. On this principle I shall, therefore, trouble you with a few words on courage and industry.

It is more than probable, that at your initiation, you will experience some degree of surprise, and, perhaps, of mortification at finding young men of your own age wonderfully advanced beyond you in knowledge. Their ideas will appear to be so correct and prompt; and their knowledge so extensive as to leave you, in your estimation, very far behind them: so far, indeed, may the distance seem, as to be too likely to have an injurious effect in depressing your courage, and in depriving you of that stimulus, so necessary to urge you to those exertions, by which you will be enabled to attain the same goal. Their acquirements appear to be beyond your attain-

and you consider them as young men who possess genius far superior to yours, or who have had advantages infinitely beyond any that can come within your reach: in fact, you regard them as objects deserving respect and admiration; but presume not to indulge an idea of competition, and hardly, indeed, of imitation. But pause a little, before your mind is made up on this point; make a little enquiry, and you will find, that, in general, when these young men commenced their hospital studies, their acquirements did not exceed yours; and, that the same advantages which they have thus improved, are now placed before you; for that a strict attention to their later studies have made all the difference you perceive.

Let this discovery work its proper effect; and, instead of permitting the consideration of their superior accomplishments, to lessen your hopes; let it, as it ought, stimulate you to strenuous exertions, from a well founded expectation of equalling them in their acquire-

ments.

ments. To accomplish this, however, impress on your mind, that almost unremitting industry must be employed; and that you have before you really an arduous task; having to acquire that, in the small space of a year, which, according to the opinion I delivered to your father, in a former letter, would require three or four: no unnecessary relaxation or admission of pleasurable indulgences can be therefore allowed. Much better it would be to appropriate a portion of your time, entirely to ease and pleasure, before or after your present professional arrangements; than to admit such an interference, during a period which should be devoted to the most serious engagements.

I will not pay you so ill a compliment as to imagine, that any admonition is necessary, to excite you to a sedulous attention to your lectures; a few remarks on the practice of taking SHORT-HAND NOTES may not, however, be useless. During anatomical demonstrations, or the experiments, with which the lectures

on chemistry, or natural philosophy, are illustrated, the taking of notes may be rather injurious; by taking the attention too much from the objects, on which the eye should be almost constantly detained. But in lectures on physiology, medicine, and, in those of chemistry, &c. when there are no particular objects presented to the view, for the purpose of impressing the images on the mind, the taking of notes will be found to be of the greatest advantage. By these you will be enabled to re-consider the doctrines you have heard advanced, and to recollect the various doctrines you have been taught; but, perhaps, the greatest advantage they afford is the unremitted attention which they necessarily excite; acting as a constant monitor, and preserving the mind from straying, so that nothing material can escape unrecorded. It is true, that to perform this task closely, requires, what some would find, a degree of almost painful perseverance; but the inconvenience experienced in the performance of it is, of itself, sufficient to show its utility.

lity. He who finds the attention requisite, in taking notes, to be inconvenient would, he may be assured, pay much less attention than he expects, if it were not thus secured; for it must be considered, that those interruptions of attention, to avoid which this exertion is required, must be immediately detected by the writer of notes; but occur unnoticed to others, who insensibly indulge, some indeed more than others, in little digressive reveries, which cannot but impair the impression intended to be made on the mind. The copying of these notes fair, and the exercise of recollection to fill up those *hiatuses* which cannot but occur, must render the impressions made by your lectures doubly strong; and if to this we add, that, by this mode, the ideas are conveyed to the mind in an order more favourable, both for comprehension and recollection, than when received more desultorily, every thing surely is said requisite to show the benefits accruing from the use of notes.

Whilst

Whilst addressing you on this subject, I must give a word or two on a practice, to which I have already hinted—employing the notes taken by others. This, I have reason to suspect, is much too frequently adopted. The consideration that the assistance of another's notes can be obtained, will frequently turn the balance, wavering between duty and indulgence. But consider, that notes are seldom taken so fully, as to carry on the subject connectedly, or as to comprise nearly the whole that has been delivered; but are, in general, taken only with sufficient celerity, to allow of taking down such observations, as appear to the writer to be of importance, from their not having occurred to him before in the same point of view. But do you not at once see how inefficient this mode must be? The tablet of your respective minds are not filled by the same objects; consequently the ideas requisite to fill them up must be different for each: another notices as important, not having before heard them, observations which, perhaps, are already indelibly impressed on your mind; and,

on the other hand, neglects those which are familiar to him, but with which you are, perhaps, totally unacquainted. Thus it is that notes of lectures are so pre-eminently useful to those who take them, beyond what they can be to others.

It must be sufficiently evident to you, that your progress will much depend, on your observing a certain order in your studies; attending to the due subordination of the several sciences which engage your attention; and arranging them, in such a series, as will constitute the connection, most favourable, for communicating the necessary knowledge.

First in the series must be placed, ANATOMY, the *sine qua non* of the whole. All the sciences, a knowledge of which you are now about to obtain, bear closely, indeed, on each other; but anatomy is the key-stone, with which they must be held together. It is the medium, through which alone, they can render the knowledge of the diseases, to which the

animal

animal frame is subject, more perfect; and, by which, they can at all be made to contribute to their removal. Anatomy then must be your first and chief object; and such an arrangement must be formed as shall secure to it a priority of attention; but, in that manner, that it shall not too much interfere with the other objects of your enquiry. This, I believe, will be best done, by taking only occasional notes, during your lectures in your first course; so that none of the intermediate time, between the lectures, will be taken up in copying; but, except that, which your attendance on the hospital practice requires, the whole of it may be devoted to dissection. Thus you will be attaining the utmost anatomical information your time allows you, and be also acquiring the general knowledge, which will render the future lectures more extensively useful to you.

So extremely necessary are dissections, and so little are hospital students sometimes aware of this, at least at their entrance, that I must here make a few remarks on this subject. By attend-

ance on anatomical lectures, instruction appears to be, and indeed actually is, conveyed in so pleasant and easy a manner, as to be likely to induce the pupil to suppose, that little more is requisite for obtaining sufficient anatomical knowledge than a regular attendance on them. But a few visits to the dissecting-room would show him the necessity of passing a very considerable portion of his time there.

The removal of parts, necessary to be made, previous to a demonstration, is generally such as to effect a total change of appearance, in the parts exhibited; in consequence they are shown to the spectators in an unnatural state, in which, any idea of their relative connections, cannot, but very imperfectly, be communicated. Hence, although the pupil may, by such lectures and demonstrations, gain a very exact idea of the form and structure, as well as of the uses of the respective parts; he must obtain a very imperfect idea of their appearance *in situ*, surrounded by parts, in connection with which they must always be considered;

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but which on these occasions are entirely removed. Indeed it would be extremely difficult for a pupil to acquire, without repeated dissections, such a knowledge of the animal body, as would impower him to investigate, anatomically, *any one* particular part. By viewing the several parts in this isolated state, the pupil would have but little more chance of acquiring a familiar knowledge of the human fabric, as it exists, than he, who examines separated masses of ruins, has of being able to point out the peculiar structure and the beauties of the building, of which they had formed a part.

By steady perseverance, then, every part should be explored. In doing this, the pupil will soon perceive how great are the advantages he is reaping; he will discover that he derives as much information from the parts he removes, as from those he displays; and he will gain that familiar acquaintance with the animal body, as will enable him, at any future period, to make any required anatomical examination

examination, with a pleasing readiness, and a well founded confidence. The anatomical knowledge, he thus obtains, will be such too as will allow him to follow, with his *mind's eye*, the ravages of internal disease; and precisely to know the different parts which are subjected to the knife in every operation; and hence be enabled to judge of their safety and utility. Be assured, that, although anatomical lectures are sufficient to furnish that general knowledge of the human body, which is desirable by him, who takes up the science, merely as a branch of natural philosophy, without a view to practical application; yet to the physician, but particularly to the surgeon, sedulous attention to dissections is absolutely indispensible.

Anatomy supplies you with a knowledge of the form and situation of the various organic parts of the system; so will PHYSIOLOGY teach you the more minute structure of these, the constituent parts of which they are formed, and the laws on which their variety of organi-

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zation depends. Without a knowledge of physiology, it will be impossible for you, even to comprehend those changes, the proximate causes of disease, which accompany each deviation from health. Physiology, therefore, next demands your attention.

Before you attend to medical, surgical, and clinical lectures, assure yourself that the easiest part of medicine and surgery, is to remove curable diseases; if their natures are but known: and, that the most difficult task is, to obtain that knowledge which NOSOLOGY teaches, by which one disease is distinguished from another. A moment's consideration can hardly be wanting, it may be supposed, to discover this; and yet I am assured, that it is very common to see young men, comparatively inattentive, whilst the difinition and pathognomic symptoms of disease are being taught; and seeming to reserve themselves for the exercise of all their attention on the *Methodus Medendi.* But whoever practices with this species of knowledge, only, has no

right

right to expect satisfactory success. The practice of medicine, as taught by a lecturer, is a collection of inferences, drawn from previous propositions; and cannot be fully understood, unless the mind has possessed itself of those propositions, and of the mode of reasoning, by which the inferences has been deduced. Previous to attempting to possess yourself of a mode of treating diseases, acquire, therefore, a knowledge of those *diagnostic symptoms*, which characterise each disease, and which mark the difference between those of similar appearances. Learn the nature of those morbid changes, which form the *proximate causes* of disease; and inform yourself respecting the various circumstances, which become the *remote* or *occasional causes*.

If, without this previous knowledge, you form to yourself a system of medical practice, this practice, though founded on the precepts delivered from a professor's chair, will, justly speaking, be only a system

of quackery. You will only acquire a set of rules, applicable to a certain set of cases, of ordinary occurrence; whereas the man of science derives, from his well conducted studies, certain established principles, which serve for the foundation of rational and salutary, general practice; and which will also assist him, when employing analogy and comparison, to discover the nature of such cases as are marked by uncommon appearances. You will, doubtless, perceive, that every thing which I have now said, respecting the necessity of obtaining a just knowledge of the nature of disease, in the practice of medicine, must be equally applicable in the practice of surgery.

Indeed, when I reflect on the too great partiality, which young students are apt to manifest, for the manual or operative part of surgery; learning it rather as an art, than a science, I perceive that it applies with still greater force. The fondness for this part of the science, in a young pupil, is easily accounted for: he sees a dreadful operation performed,

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and with the happiest success: the operator obtains the applause which is due, and our student anxiously endeavours to inform himself of every step of an operation, which appears to him so easy to imitate, and which, he thinks, would, nevertheless, secure him that fame for which he pants.

But, my young friend, I must apprize you, that celebrity is not thus cheaply purchased. Much is to be learnt, before the skill you have witnessed, can be imitated — consider what has preceded the operation. The surgeon was called in an incipient state of the disease, when its characters were but faintly marked; he then had to employ his abilities in endeavouring to discriminate the disease. This being done, farther knowledge was required, to resolve on a mode of treatment most likely to arrest its progress. This, from the result of the case, we learn to have been unsuccessful; and, in consultation, perhaps, with a rival, he had to relate the progress of the disease, and the methods adopted for its cure;

subjecting the opinions he had formed, at periods most unfavourable for decision, to be judged of by another, who sees the disease fully developed, in an advanced stage. The disease proving incurable, but by operation, did nothing else remain but to exhibit his skilful dexterity?—Yes, my young friend, he had first to assure himself of the extent of the disease, that it might not manifest itself again, after a cure had been supposed to have been accomplished by the operation; to measure the powers of life, and determine if they were equal to support the patient, through the temporary aggravation of his weakness and of his sufferings; and, lastly, to pass in idea through every part his knife was to sever, and to ascertain whether the operation, considered by itself, was admissible or not. Having done all this, he proceeds to the operation;—and now, having reviewed what I have just written, suppose the operation performed with the utmost possible skill, and will you not yet allow, that the operation has been the least exertion of the surgeon's abilities; and that the judgment to

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detect the nature of a hidden disease, and the skill to prevent its attaining a malignity requiring operation, are qualifications, at least, equally necessary, with that of being able to manifest dexterity in wielding the knife.

Be not fascinated by the showiness of operation, nor believe that you can become a skilful surgeon by any such short ways; on the contrary, be assured, that before you can pretend to that character, you must submit to long and heavy—and even wearisome plodding, through the paths of science. Your eyes must be almost constantly employed in observing, and your mind in recording. Thus only can you attain that skill which will render the exercise of your profession pleasant and satisfactory, which, without it, would be a source of the severest mortification and disappointments.

Neatness, in the application of dressings and bandages, is very desirable to be attained; but be careful not to run into finicalness in

this point. It is very true, that, on the other hand, you should be on your guard lest you acquire habits of slovenliness; and, therefore, I only mean to warn you against wasting that time in too great nicety, which might be employed in contemplating the character of the wound or sore, or any disease placed before your eyes; in impressing, indelibly, on your mind, the peculiar unhealthful appearances you may perceive, in tracing the causes of these up to their sources, and recording the effects, salutary or otherwise, of the means employed.

I suspect you will think me too early, with the subject I next select for your attention; for, supposing you even ignorant of medicine, and much of your time to be required for your anatomical pursuits, yet I cannot refrain from enjoining you, not to lose the least opportunity of CLINICAL INSTRUCTION. Consider for a moment, and you will perceive that clinical lectures are, to the practice of medicine, what dissection is to anatomy—it is demonstration. By clinical lectures, disease

case is, as it were, embodied, and brought before the student, as a subject for his leisure examination. By these, the tutor is enabled to illustrate the nature of diseases; to teach their various differences, by actual comparison of those which approximate in appearance; and to impress their several characters on the mind of his pupil; to make him mark their growth and declension; to call on him to compare the ideas he has formed of disease, with disease actually in existence; to render him conversant with the use of medicines, and with their various effects. Thus might I proceed in enumerating the advantages which may be yielded to you, by an attendance on clinical lectures; but all that remains shall be summed up, in saying, that he who engages in practice, without this species of instruction, must be supposed to know diseases only by description; and when the fallacious appearances and *proteal* forms, which diseases assume, are considered, it is really to be apprehended, that consequences, too unpleasant to dwell on, must then succeed. He, on the

contrary, who has thus had diseases placed before him, their various lineaments pointed out, and their peculiar cast and character rendered familiar to him, has not that knowledge to acquire, at the expence of the ease, and, perhaps,—it must be said,—truth demands it, the lives of those who fly to him for succour.

I need not enlarge on the necessity of your attendance on lectures on medicine, and surgery. But I fear I have too much reason to say, that pupils are too frequently satisfied with, a much less portion of instruction in CHEMISTRY and NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, than is really necessary for the successful prosecution of their studies. They obtain some general knowledge of these sciences, and then rest satisfied, not aware, that the want of sufficient intelligence, in this respect, may injure them, when established in their profession. Although the ignorant may be satisfied with the advice of the ignorant, intelligent men, very properly, seldom fix on a medical man to attend their families, unless they have themselves tried

tried and proved him, by conversation, on different topics; or, that they have had a favourable report of his abilities, from those they esteem competent to judge.

Now consider, that natural philosophy is always esteemed an essential part of a liberal education; chemistry, too, from the curious and interesting phenomena it yields, and from the astonishing discoveries it is continually producing in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, has excited such general attention, as almost to have become the fashionable science. From the frequency with which these two sciences are studied, by gentlemen, not of the medical profession, there is every reason to suppose, you will often meet with those who may be disposed, to employ the knowledge they possess, as a test of your's. Should you, in this case, be found to be well informed, you necessarily will rise in their esteem; but how despicable would be the opinion they would form of the professional man whom they had found wanting in these sciences; the immediate

diate connection of which, with the study of medicine, is so generally known. You must clearly see how much injury such a discovery must do you immediately with them; but that is the least you have to dread. Those who are aware of their own incapacity to judge in matters of science, generally look up to such characters, as I have described, to model their own conduct by; and were you to be held but slightly in esteem by one of these oracles of the neighbourhood, the mischief you might suffer might be beyond your conception.

Attend, therefore, as early as you can to the study of both these sciences—but, perhaps, although aware of the importance of following the advice I offer, and possessed of an hour or two, which might be thus employed, you are fearful that your progress will be checked, by your attention being directed to so many subjects at once; but if you make the experiment you will find, that the mind, like the stomach, though soon cloyed with one kind of food, may have its appetite excited again,

even to eagerness, by placing before it a little variety. The old cautionary maxim, against having too many irons in the fire, at a time, I dare say occurs promptly to you here; but I am ready to oppose it, with, I hope, an useful observation,—that, by having more irons in the fire than one, you may always have one hot.

By engaging in the study of different subjects, the student will experience another considerable advantage, as he will thereby be enabled to attach himself longer to his studies, and with less fatigue of mind. Thus, when having toiled for some hours in turning over the leaves of a dictionary or lexicon, classical research has become so irksome, and even disgusting, that a few minutes more attention to it would, with difficulty, be obtained; if some other subject of study be taken up, he will find his mind attack it, not only with renewed vigour, but with a pleasurable avidity, arising from its being engaged in attention to a new object; on the same principle, perhaps,

as the eye seeks relief, in change of colour; and as every member of the body, in change of position.

I must, however, observe, that this gratification to the mind should not be permitted, beyond certain limits; lest such a degree of instability be generated, that the student lose the power of fixing his mind long enough on one subject, to render his studies at all efficient. Nay, should this instability already exist, to such a degree as has been just described, the utmost pains should be taken to restrain it; the mind should be forced into continued attention to one subject, however much it may be disposed to fly from it. Mathematical enquiries have been recommended, as useful in producing that tone of mind, which favours this uniform exercise of its powers; and, certainly, by resolutely persevering in such studies, the mind being thus frequently fixed on one object, will gradually gain those habits of abstraction so necessary to every kind of study.

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But should these studies be disagreeable, or the time for them be spared, with too much interruption to the attainment of those sciences, more particularly the object of his attention, he then should set himself some task, rendered interesting by the importance of the information it conveys, and firmly resolve on perseverance, in attention, until its accomplishment. Considering that, if notwithstanding his conviction of the importance of the acquisition, he should be unable to bend his mind, sufficiently to it, he would be forced, however unwillingly, to admit that his mind is unequal to attaining that knowledge which the profession requires. But, this desponding idea must not be too readily admitted he should again try,—and again—let him make the task at first but small, then gradually enlarge it, resolving not to be conquered. Thus will he be assured of victory, his mind will become strong by repeated success, and he confirmed in his resolutions, by the pleasure arising from self-gratulation, on the value of his acquirements.

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By the exercise of a due degree of attention to your first winter course of lectures, you will acquire so considerable a portion of knowledge of the most interesting nature, that you will not be able to avoid looking back, and making the comparison with your former almost untaught state. Gratified by perceiving the progress you have made, and now fully convinced of the great importance of every moment of your present time, you cannot require to be prompted to diligence: a laudable emulation will be sufficient, to excite you to fill up the otherwise vacant hours of summer, with studiously reading those books which will be recommended to your attention, by the different professors, whose lectures you attend.

Permit me, here, to suggest one hint or two. Never read but with your pen in your hand, and your common-place book beside you, in which you will enter such passages as strike your mind by their novelty and importance. Besides this, you will do well

well to strive, to make your extracts from the more interesting and valuable books, in the form of a regular analysis: thus you will, not only secure the individual passages which excite your notice, but, by placing them in the order of arrangement in which you find them, you will have them stored in your memory in that series which will best serve for their future recollection; and, at the same time, furnish your mind with a correct impression of the work, as a whole.

Let, at least, one of the books you select for reading be in one of the dead languages, so that the knowledge you have obtained of the Greek or Latin may be augmented rather than be suffered to be lost. The same advice applies, with equal force, to any other language you may have acquired; and, indeed, when I consider the numerous scientific works which are written in the French and German tongue, I am obliged to urge you, to endeavour to number the knowledge

ledge of these languages among your accomplishments.

To pretend to direct the course of your studies the following winter, would be presumption, beyond what I wish to be guilty of: the knowledge you will, by then have acquired, will suggest to you every thing, which an eagerness for your welfare would lead me to say.—It will, also, I trust, induce you to believe, with me, that the lectures and attendance of *one season* are not sufficient fully to qualify any pupil; unless his capacity and genius be wonderfully pre-eminent.

I have not yet mentioned the study of the OBSTETRIC ART. By mentioning it last, I by no means wish to insinuate that it is the least deserving your regard; on the contrary, on every account, it will demand a very close attention, and will handsomely reward you for it. But when I consider the multitude

multitude of important attentions with which your mind must be employed, by performing the tasks I have already set before you, I suspect that opportunities could not be found, to allow a due regard to be paid to this at the same time. Besides, the practice of midwifery cannot be duly learnt, nor the peculiar diseases of puerperal women, nor of suckling children, be understood, unless the mind has previously gained possession of a due portion of anatomical, physiological, and nosological truths.

I am your's, with sincerity.

LETTER IV.

HINTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF A YOUNG MAN, ENTERING ON THE DUTIES OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

Topics.

Navy-Surgeon.—Conciliatory Manners.—Conduct to professional Men.—To the Ignorant.—To Nostrum-Mongers.—Consultation.—Hasty Judgment, ill Consequences of.—Attention to the first Stage of Disease.—Firmness.—Perseverance.—Conduct to Patients.—Prognosis.—Medical Jurisprudence.—Insanity of Mind.—Death by Poison.—External Violence.—Self-Murder.

MY DEAR FRIEND;

IT is with extreme pleasure I learn, that your hospital studies are completed, with satisfaction to yourself, and with the approbation of your different teachers. Fearful that your years will not yet be likely to give you consequence sufficient in a neighbourhood, you are, I understand, at a loss how you shall dispose of yourself, at the present; and I learn you have some thoughts of obtaining a situation in the navy. Towards directing you in your determination I must make one remark—that, as it is impossible to obtain

too

too much professional information, it is incumbent on you to endeavour so to dispose of yourself, for the time which precedes your establishment, that you may be in the way of deriving still further accession of knowledge.

You very properly say that, if it were within the reach of your finances, you would attend this season to the practice of some other hospital; that the knowledge you already possess might be corrected and confirmed. Permit me to repeat what I have already said, that the lectures and demonstrations you obtain in one year's attendance, is not sufficient —trust to me, that this is the truth; and let your choice of situation be influenced by this consideration. Obtain, if possible, and I conceive it may be done without much difficulty,—such a situation, with some established professional man, as from the practice you will witness, will augment your knowledge, and may assist in furnishing you with the means of attending, at least two more sets of lectures and demonstrations.

With respect to your engaging in the navy, there is much to be considered. In the first place, it is necessary to enquire whether you are fully qualified for the situation of a surgeon of a ship, since, if that should not be the case, you certainly are not qualified for the situation of a surgeon's-mate. It is necessary, in many situations, but particularly in a man of war, that a subordination of rank should sometimes exist, without even a subordination of abilities. The first, and even the second lieutenant of a ship of war, should possess qualifications equal to those of the captain himself, since, should accident deprive the ship's company of their captain, there should not be a chance of their being sacrificed by the ignorance of his successor. The same principle, undoubtedly, directs that the abilities of a surgeon's mate should be such as would qualify him to fill the situation of surgeon. If sufficiently qualified, your plan, therefore, cannot be objected to; and, if the nation is at war, then, unhappily, will the situation you have chosen, most probably, supply you with too many

many opportunities of exercising your skill and humanity.

But, for the sake of argument, and of those whose attainments are not equal to those you really possess, I will suppose I am speaking of one who is not fully qualified. In such a case, be assured, that his appointment and situation would, in general, be adapted to his qualifications: if these be but low, depend upon it his situation will be appropriate to them; he will be sent to some distant station, where the trust, committed to him, will be but slight, and his opportunities and improvement, in advancement, but few. There, conscious of his deficiencies, and secluded from every chance of adding to his stock of professional knowledge; the vigour of his mind is lessened, his faculties, for want of exercise, become torpid; injurious habits, even perhaps sottishness, the most ruinous to a medical man of all others, steal insensibly on him, and render him totally incapable of deriving any advantage from that change of situation, which may at last occur.

Do not think the outline I have here sketched to be the mere product of fancy, but be assured it is a faithful delineation of what is too frequently seen. Never look, therefore, to a situation in the navy, as one in which you are to obtain knowledge, but as one in which you may exercise, with considerable success, the knowledge you have acquired.

Whatever temporary situation you may choose, you will, I doubt not, employ your leisure hours in increasing that fund of knowledge, on which you must draw for your support and comfort, when permanently established in your profession. To that period I will now suppose you have arrived, and will endeavour to present you with a few, not unuseful, monitory hints; but as these will be on subjects not at all connected, you must excuse the desultory manner in which they appear.

In every business and profession, a certain degree of yielding and conciliatory conduct is necessary,

to procure that interest in the mind of others which may dispose them to adopt a favourable preference. This species of conduct then, as far as the practice of the respectable part of the society warrants, you must adopt; but go not a single step farther—your profession is, in itself, most honourable; and if you perform its duties, according to the dictates of your conscience, you deserve to be respected; but if you obtain it not from others, remember you owe a certain degree of respect to yourself. It is not for you to cringe for employment, or to lick the ground on obtaining it; for no great obligation of gratitude is due from you to any one, who chuses to employ you, because he believes his life to be safer in your hands than in another's. There is an obligation, indeed, under which you must act, that of calling forth your utmost skill to procure him that relief he requires. But suppose this done, and that, by indefatigable exertions, you have relieved his agonizing tortures, or have even snatched back from death one, who, perhaps, personally a stranger to you,

employed you because he could find no other of equal abilities. Weigh the obligations, and see which preponderates. Be assured, my friend, men, however they may wanton with it, in gratifying injurious habits, or silly caprices, will not be disposed to trifle with life in mere compliment to you.

From the goodness of your own disposition, and, from the little knowledge you can have of the world, you must be too little suspicious of the disagreeable circumstances you will have to encounter, before you find yourself firmly established in your profession. Let your industry have been ever so great, and your professional knowledge, even as complete as the state of the science will admit, expect to see men, in every respect your inferiors, frequently preferred; but heed it not, it must be so, whilst men will be the dupes of ignorance, trick, and impudence. But are you tamely to witness this, without opposing it?—Certainly not, if you have a chance of succeeding in your opposition. Should you discover

cover a being, with hardly more than brutal intellects, devastating a neighbourhood, by his ignorance and baneful presumption, it becomes a duty to oppose him, in his destructive course; tenderness for an individual, and for such an individual, ought not to be regarded as a feather's weight, against the lives with which he dares to trifle.

Be not, however, too hasty in forming your judgment, in this respect; nor let your censure fall on anyone, because his origin has been humbler, and his early education has, with his subsequent opportunities of information, been more limited than your own. Let not the coarseness of the exterior deceive you; and be assured, before you condemn, that the unadorned casket contains not a jewel of the highest estimation. Perhaps you may be opposing a man whose industry has called forth such genius, and such powers of the mind, as have enabled him to overpower the mighty obstacles placed before him, and to supply himself with knowledge equal to your own.

Similar care must be taken, when placed in any situation which demands your opinion of nostrums, or of nostrum-mongers. Candor and justice demands, that you do not decry a medicine, merely because it is a nostrum; since it may possess virtues beyond those medicines which are generally known. Indeed, should it be clearly proved to you, that any medicine of this description possesses powers, in some painful and dangerous disease, beyond any other, it is incumbent on you, not only to countenance the use of the remedy; but to promote, to the utmost, a fair and liberal recompence to the author, for making his discovery public for the benefit of mankind. But should he reject ample offers for the discovery, and choose to confine its benefits, to the little circle which would obtain it by his vending,—little, I mean, compared to the circle it would reach, by the universal knowledge of its composition; you then may reckon him a sordid selfish being, who miserably places his own enormous enrichment, against those sufferings of his fellow-creatures, which he might

every

every where remove. Thus much you might say of him; but let me repeat, that candour and justice decree, that you speak of his nostrum according to the powers it manifests.

But perhaps some mechanic, whose fingers were so clumsy, and whose brains were so ill-moulded, that he had not power to earn his bread by labour, starts with some medicine, taken almost at hazard, from some obsolete book, and professes himself to be able to cure some alarming disorder; and you perceive that, gulled by his swindling artifices, great numbers are stripped of their property, without experiencing any benefit at all; and that great numbers also are not only robbed, but murdered by this all-wonderful specific;—then, surely, it is your duty to take every opportunity to drag the villain into public notice, and if possible to public justice *.

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* About ten years ago, or more, a man who had striven in vain to get his living, by keeping a coal-shed; and whose extreme

The general and regular mode of obtaining advice is such as seems likely to prevent, as much as possible, much mischief being done by ignorant pretenders to *regular* practice. Should the

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extreme ignorance was almost proverbial in his neighbourhood, set up for a conjuror, in which situation he appeared to thrive exceedingly, when the magistrates, on some complaints being made against him, committed him for some months to prison He was lately seen, I am informed, at a little country town, near the sea-coast, where it appeared, that he was living very comfortably, by pretending to almost miraculous healing powers, and by selling his packets to all the country round.

In this age of science and beneficence, it is surprising that no public-spirited and wealthy men have stepped forward, to form an association, and establish a fund for the purpose of ascertaining the actual properties of every nostrum,—of promoting the recompense of any one who published any useful discoveries in medicine—and of furnishing with counsel, and, the means of prosecution, those whose healths have been injured, and whose properties have been stolen, by ignorant pretenders to medicine, whether under the characters of advertising quacks, cancer-curers, or regulars.

friends

friends of a sick person perceive his illness increase, rather than abate; and should they doubt whether the medicines employed are more injurious than salutiferous, they have at once the means of determining this, by obtaining the opinion of a physician: and remember, that nothing can be more likely to excite suspicion in the friends of the sick, that your treatment of him has been improper, than a shyness in admitting the visits of a physician. I must acknowledge, that I know no good reason that can be adduced, why an apothecary should, at any time, oppose the inclination of his patient to obtain additional advice. Nor should you wait for the proposal originating with the patient or his friends; but should even a doubt as to the nature of the disease, and consequently as to its mode of treatment, arise in your mind, do not leave it to be solved by perhaps the fatal termination of the disease; but fairly state your doubt, and ask for the satisfaction derivable from the opinion of some man of eminence. But perhaps you are asked to recommend a physician—in that case you would,

would, with propriety perhaps, adopt the conduct which I have ever done—leave the nomination of the physician to your patient, without any regard to your own friendship to medical men. Thus you act with fairness to your patient, by submitting your treatment of him to an impartial investigation; and, at the same time, do not interfere with those obligations, which he may owe, to some physician for former important services. The grand fault, with respect to the employment of physicians, is the calling them in too late. Indeed it must be acknowledged, that physicians are sometimes called in so late, and for the purpose too of affording a sanction to what has passed; that a stranger to the modes of the country might think, that their office was, rather to administer extreme unction, than relief to the sick.

I confidently trust that such an omission will never occur, on your part, but from an erroneous, and, perhaps, hasty judgment, in some ambiguous case. In this respect, I entreat you to be on your guard, and to consider that,

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by such hasty determination, you expose yourself to the chance of censure, injure the profession in the minds of the ignorant, and, what is of more consequence than either, you perhaps materially injure your patient. I will place before you a possible, nay, an actual case of too prompt decision, the more expressly to shew you the necessity of caution in this respect. A gentlewoman applies for advice for a hard tumour, possessing almost the whole of the breast; the surgeon examines it, but, without asking a question, hastily declares it to be a cancer; the patient expressing her surprise, this opinion differing so widely from that which she had before obtained, he adds, in confirmation of what he has already said, that the breast ought to be directly removed. Alarmed at this dreadful sentence, the poor gentlewoman applies to another surgeon, who, on enquiry, finds it to be the consequence of a most severe inflammation, which had attacked the breast a few months before, during suckling. Having thus learnt its origin, in consequence of a little patient enquiry, he promised

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her relief, and, by slow degrees, nature, judiciously aided, accomplishes the cure. Reflect on this case, and consider what might have been the consequence of such most censurable conduct. It is very true, that the knowledge possessed by the first surgeon might be such, that he would not have performed the operation; but that he would, at more leisure, have traced back the history of the disease, which would have shown him his error. But suppose the terrified patient to have proceeded from him, and to have placed herself under the care of one of those pests of society, *pretended cancer-curers:* nature, if not too much interrupted, would still have completed the cure, which would, of course, have been attributed to the nostrums employed. The credit, thus obtained, might have been sufficient to have deluded hundreds, into a confidence on the same nostrum; and have caused them to neglect the only known cure, and to perish a dreadful death.

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In hospital practice, you will but seldom have the opportunity of noticing diseases, in their first stages; to repair the defect which may hence arise, it will be very necessary to form, in your mind, a correct knowledge of the earliest characteristic symptoms of every disease. Then you will not have to fear, that dangerous diseases may run on, undetected by you, beyond the reach of your skill.

Inflammation of the lungs is a disease which, from the insidiousness of its first attacks, and the great degree of danger belonging to it, is, on this account, particularly deserving of your attention. You should be thoroughly aware that the breathing, in the incipient state of the disease, is frequently so triflingly affected as to excite but very little anxiety in the patient, and to induce him to speak of it in the slightest terms. Frequently will he appear so well, attending as usual to his various concerns, that even a medical man, unless on his guard, might not suspect him to be under the influence of a disease so full of danger. In children, in par-

ticular, this ambiguity is frequently met with. Even where the disease has existed several hours, the variation in the breathing will, perhaps, only be discovered by very earnest attention. In such a disease, therefore, where, if you let the early hours of attack escape unnoticed, you consign your patient to a dreadful lingering death, extreme vigilance must necessarily be required.

Firmness in your decisions is not less necessary than vigilance. The importance of early and most liberal bleedings in inflammations is doubtless, sufficiently obvious to you. I therefore only find myself here called on, to press you to inflexible firmness whenever your decision is ignorantly opposed. Frequently will you have to oppose prejudices, not of the most yielding nature. Too often will both patients and their friends exclaim against what they will esteem a prodigal waste of blood, in cases where but for copious bleeding, life must be lost. In such situations, consider that, to yield is to surrender your patient to

certain death. Shrink not, therefore, in the least, from your duty. Point out the absolute propriety of complying with your directions, in terms as strong as you can employ; and, in no case, submit to adopt a different line of conduct from that which science directs. If indeed, their obstinacy and folly be such, that they will not permit you to do *all* in your power for their benefit; rather than let them throw themselves into the hands of any ignorant pretender, render them as much service as they will allow you. But, although you concede thus far; on no account, employ a single active measure contrary to your judgment: thus if submission to an operation is refused, use, with undiminished zeal, all the lesser means for relief: but never submit to perform the smallest operation; unless it is fully approved by your judgment.

Perseverance, in endeavouring to promote the adoption of necessary measures, will sometimes become a part of your duty; frequently, indeed, will the supineness of the friends be

such, that the life of the patient would be lost, were you not to interfere with the utmost activity, and with almost a magisterial authority. This may often be the case, in inflammation of the vital parts; but, in no case, is it more required, than in those of incarcerated herniæ: here perhaps life is only to be saved by the operation, and the chance is in proportion to its early performance. Admit therefore no triflings, no waste of time, lest, during the waverings between tenderness and duty, the life of the patient be lost.

Cases may too frequently occur, where most serious diseases have originated from indulgence, in a vicious and destructive course of life. Here it becomes your bounden duty to declare to your patient, firmly and decidedly, your opinion as to the cause of his malady, and your conviction of the impossibility of saving him, if he continue to indulge in those practices which, as they at first excited, so must they keep up a continuance of the disease. Having thus performed your duty, nothing

thing remains, but for him to make his election between health and disease,—life and death.

Other cases will occur in which a degree of reserve, and even of disguise may be necessary to be employed. Such are those where, although you may discover the characteristic marks of Syphilis, the patient evidently does not entertain the least suspicion of the nature of the disease. This caution becomes here necessary, since, by a rash and unguarded declaration, you may unnecessarily occasion an irreparable breach in domestic happiness and tranquillity. Common policy will lead you to the adoption of this caution, with those who move in the genteeler situations of life; nor should I have troubled you with this hint, but for the sake of those in a humbler station: recollect that happiness is as dear to them as to their superiors in fortune; and that, by one harsh and unguarded sentence, you involve them in the utmost distress. I must here mention to you one, out of several instances

which have come to my knowledge, of the ill effects of this incautious and cruel conduct. A child was taken, by its mother, to the shop of one who had obtained a tolerable fortune by administering medicines among the poor, to have his opinion as to an eruption which had appeared on the body of the child. After examining the eruption, he declared it to be venereal; and, on the mother's asserting her own innocence, and her assurance of her husband's, he confidently repeated his declaration. The poor woman returned home, accused her husband; he in his turn, declaring his innocence, accused her. In this miserable state they continued nearly two months, recriminating each other, the child getting worse, and he who had already rendered them wretched, daily picking their pockets. A neighbour who witnessed their distress, prevailed on them to take the child to a public charity, where the minds of the poor creatures were immediately calmed, by the assurance that the symptoms bore not the least resemblance to those of the disease suspected, and in a very short time the child,

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by the use of the most simple means, obtained a perfect cure.

To deliver a judicious prognosis will often be of much advantage to your professional character, and is a part of the duty you owe to the friends of the patient. A careful investigation should, therefore, be made; and as soon as your mind is satisfied that danger exists, no time should be lost, but the circumstance should be immediately communicated to the patient's friends. Many reasons, independent of its effect on your professional character, may be urged for your attention to this point. In the first place, on a faithful report of your prognosis, may depend the determination of the patient's friends, as to calling in additional aid. Were it for no other reason than this, it is a duty, the observance of which cannot be excused; because you possess no right to prevent the obtaining of all the satisfaction which can be had; but this, your concealment of that danger you perceive, might effectually prevent. In the second

place, from danger being thus too long concealed, the patient may be deprived of the opportunity of making that arrangement of his affairs, for the want of which, those most dear to him, besides the piercing affliction of losing a beloved relative, might be involved in unexpected poverty. By such an omission you also prevent his making that distribution of his property, to which he might be prompted by gratitude and affectionate regard. Besides, by allowing hope to tender the hearts, until, perhaps, the dreadful event happens, the pangs of regret and affliction are redoubled, and—but, enough is, undoubtedly, said, to evince the necessity of a vigilant attention, and of a frank and candid statement of the danger, with which the patient is apparently menaced.

Observe, that I do not recommend a declaration of this danger to the patient himself, but to some of his friends and relatives. I say some, lest, by imparting it to any one alone, an unfair use might be made of the partial communication.

communication. Your own feelings will, I doubt not, direct you to relate the unpleasant news with gentleness that you may, at least, not increase the anguish you are obliged to inflict. It will also be required of you to state fully, to the friends of the sick, the probable consequences of communicating to the patient the danger he may be in; and to inform them how likely the depressing effects of a sentence of death might be, to counteract all the exertions made, by medicine and cordial nutriment, to sustain declining life. Having made this communication, the task of determining whether the declaration of his danger shall be made, will, as it ought, remain with his relations and friends.

I shall devote the remaining part of this letter to the endeavour to furnish you with a few useful hints, on the subject of MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE. I am well satisfied of my incompetence to treat this subject so fully as its importance demands; and, therefore, only offer the following observations, merely as outlines

lines for your own judgment to fill up: hoping the world may be favoured, by a full treatise on this important branch of medical duty, by some one more qualified to undertake it.

The task of consigning the unhappy maniac to confinement, is, by the law of the land, given to medical men: but the frequent difficulty of decision, and the great degree of responsibility with which it loads them, renders it highly desirable that some alteration might be made, in this respect.

The late shocking attempt on the life of the King, and some other dreadful occurrences of a similar kind, have rationally excited a considerable degree of alarm, in the friends of those persons who have manifested symptoms of lunacy. Nor is it to be wondered at, that those, who were before satisfied in allowing those to be at liberty, who had enjoyed lucid intervals of considerable length, are now apprehensive of dreadful consequences from such permission.

Previous to the proposed confinement of such a person, you may be applied to, for the purpose of signing a certificate of his lunacy. A detail is laid before you of his acts of lunacy, at some former period, and of his violence of conduct, and savage ferocity at that time. But the unhappy person himself, claims your pity; reminds you of the length of the interval since passed; assures you of his good state of body and mind, and desires an instance to be brought which should evince the least mark of even approaching insanity: he implores you to consider, that, thus to be torn from his family, and dragged out of civil society, to be associated with actual maniacs, must soon, indeed, reduce him to that horrid state, which, only to think of, shatters every nerve.

Thus may you be harrassed, when called to separate a man from society, who evinces not the least mark of insanity; and, even when a state of insanity is present, you may find more difficulty in making the decision, than could possibly be suspected. The task imposed

posed on you is, indeed, so momentous, and sometimes so difficult, as to induce me to dwell a little longer on the subject. Allow me, then, to point out a case of actual occurrence, where, in a state of real insanity, a considerable degree of difficulty of decision arose. A gentleman farmer was brought to a house for the reception of lunatics, his friends grounding the necessity of his confinement, on his conducting his affairs in such a manner, as must soon bring him to ruin. On speaking to the patient he said, if his friends could state any circumstance, which he could not defend, on principles of reason and equity, he would consent to be confined for the rest of his days. He was then asked—Do you not give more wages than other farmers?—Yes. Why do you?—Because I am of opinion, that the standing wages of labourers is much too small; and the neighbouring farmers agree with me in that opinion, but have not integrity enough to follow my example, although they know their labourers to be almost starving. But have you not had it clearly demonstrated to you, that this proceeding must terminate in your ruin?—Yes,

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but—a question in my turn—Am I to be deemed a madman, because I will not save myself from ruin, by starving a number of my fellow-creatures. Well, but your friends say that you have thoughts of leaving your farm to your servants, and to make a tour over Scotland, setting out with only a crown in your pocket. Is that a rational intention? —Yes. I have certainly a right to make what tour I please:—it will be a more rational tour than your sparks of quality make, for I go to inform myself of the agriculture of the country I pass through. But you leave your farm to the mercy of your servants.—So do other farmers, and more madly than I should, since, by my generosity, I have assured myself of the fidelity of my servants. But was it not madness to think of setting out on this excursion, with only a crown in your pocket?—So, extravagant generosity is first brought as a proof of my madness, and, this failing, you mean to prove it by my parsimony. But I can explain this part of my conduct also. I know I injure myself by the wages I pay, and therefore I

judge

judge I can spare but little for myself—so much for my parsimony. But how is this crown to carry you through?—Thus—I shall take one of my horses for the first thirty miles, and then travel on foot; and thus, with care, my five shillings will carry me fifty miles from home. Now the object of my journey is agricultural knowledge, and my wish is to obtain it as cheap as I can, therefore I will hire myself as a labourer until I have got five shillings more, and then set off again. I have got such recommendations as will insure me employ and extra wages. In this manner I shall perform my tour; and get, perhaps, as much useful knowledge as will enable me to pay my men their due, without incurring ruin. Staggered by the acuteness of these answers, the medical gentleman was, with difficulty, induced to sign the certificate of his lunacy, and, at last, did it with that want of strong conviction as left it a burthen on his mind.

In a little time all doubts however were removed, he threw himself over the ballustrades of a stair-case, although with but little injury. On being asked what induced him to do this, he said, that he long had it in intention, and had only waited for God's consent: that he, that morning, had put a piece of paper on the frame of the window to ascertain whether his intention was approved. If the paper blew outwards, he was to infer he had permission; and, if inwards, not.—Well, he was asked, did it blow outwards—No, he answered, it remained where I placed it, from which I concluded the answer was—I might do which I liked, and therefore I threw myself down stairs.—Let it be considered, that if, in this case, the medical man had refused to certify him to be a madman, and any serious mischief had followed, the heaviest reproaches would have been heaped on him, and a disinterested opinion, delivered according to the best of his judgment, might have seriously hurt his professional character.

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The legislature has, already, enjoined some useful regulations; nevertheless, the laws, on this point, certainly demand a careful revision. To prevent abuses, the houses which receive maniacs are subjected to the visitations of a committee of physicians; and the law orders, that no one shall be confined in any of these houses, unless a certificate of his insanity is first given by some medical man. But much more is required to be done, to secure the confinement of those whose liberty is dangerous to others, and to prevent malignity or caprice, from obtaining the confinement of those, to whom it is unnecessary.

The most learned physicians have failed, in their attempt, to give a satisfactory definition of madness; and very considerable difficulty arises often, in the endeavour to ascertain the existence of madness: so great is the cunning, and the power of managing himself, which the maniac sometimes possesses. In cases requiring this nicety of examination, surely the

trust is too great to commit to any single medical man, taken indiscriminately. He may be incompetent to judge; and may, therefore, deceived by appearances, decree the unnecessary deprivation of liberty of one person, or let loose on the public another, who has it in intention to kill his nearest relation, or dearest friend. But we will suppose the person applied to every way qualified to form a judgment, in such a case; and, that he is required to certify the insanity of a person, manifesting no symptom of madness whatever; but, on his making this objection, the relation, who makes the application for the confinement, asserts, that he is now, indeed, in a lucid interval, but, that if left at liberty a few hours, the fit may return, and the life of some one be lost. How can a medical man determine to act in such a case?—Why should he be placed in a situation, liable to be required to perform an act of such consequence, on the mere *ipse dixit* of, perhaps, some artful villain.

But this is not the whole of the disagreeable office with which the law has invested you—I do not mean to say wantonly, far from it; for I know and feel the difficulty, which the legislature has here to meet. It renders, however, every medical man, as it were a *Custos morum*, an office, which I will venture to assert, few would have the presumption to assume, but from the mischiefs which might follow their refusal to act, whilst the law is so imperfect in these particular cases. The cases, to which I here allude, are those where the alienations of judgment are the consequences of the abuse of spirituous liquors. A great law authority has, I understood, asserted, that any person who is disposed, when intoxicated, to aim at the life of another; and who will not refrain from intoxication, ought to be confined. In this observation every rational person must, I think, concur; but still, as drunkenness and madness are essentially different, the medical man, who would certify such a person to be a madman, would go beyond his opinion; and would act in his own wrong

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for the public good. But, although drunkenness and madness are, in themselves, essentially different, it must be considered, that repeated intoxication must so far impair the faculties; that, between the paroxysms of drunkenness, when the ruinous consequences of their unfortunate addiction rush on their minds, such a considerable degree of morbid irritability occurs, as forces the unhappy beings to fly for relief to fresh draughts of liquor, and even renders them liable to fits of the most dangerous passion. Such persons are, I think, undoubtedly, fit persons for confinement; since the only chance of a cure, for this dreadfully irritable state of the mind, and of their wretched propensity, would be yielded by a temporary suspension of their ruinous habits. By drunkenness, also, the mind may become so injured, that, even between the paroxysms, such modes of thinking, and such resolutions may be adopted, as may be marked by the grossest absurdity, and most injurious tendencies.

A man with an income of six hundred pounds per annum, from a genteel business, took up the resolution to live as he best liked the rest of his days, to give up his business, abandon his wife and two children, sell his goods, to live and lodge in an ale-house until the money was spent, and then retire to the parish poor-house. This resolution be strictly followed, consigned his family to ruin, and now eats the bread of idleness in the parish poor-house, instead of being lodged in Bridewell or Bedlam. How nice is the descrimination, necessary in some of these cases; and how little likely it is that it shall be obtained from some individuals of our profession. May our legislators see these difficulties, and decree those measures which may remove them.

I, with deference, think, that, in cases where madness is not actually manifest, the depositions, *on oath*, by at least two persons, should be required, to empower a medical man to sign a certificate of lunacy, where he has not himself witnessed it; that the certificate of a single medical man, not a physician, should

should only empower the reception of a patient in a mad-house, in ambiguous cases; and that, to obtain his continuance, the concurrent opinion of another medical man, or, perhaps, of a physician, should be required;—that any indifferent person, fearing mischief to himself or others, from a maniac improperly at liberty, on satisfying, *on oath*, one or more justices of the peace, and one or more medical men, of the madness of one thus left at liberty by his friends, might oblige them to adopt the necessary confinement;—that statutes of lunacy might be obtained at a less expence—and that, preparatory to drawing up a bill for these purposes, a committee be appointed to specify, as particularly as possible, the nature of those ambiguous cases, which would warrant, and even demand confinement.

My medical experience somewhat exceeds your's; but you must have seen enough to show you that madness is a disease most alarmingly increasing, perhaps, from those violent fluctuations of the mind, with which many individuals must be harrassed, in a rich mercantile

country, where pecuniary speculations must be prevalent; perhaps, it may proceed chiefly, from the frequency of the accursed habit of taking spirituous liquors, or perhaps—from a cause too little suspected to allow me to venture my conjecture.—The fact, however, is, that the disease is alarmingly frequent, and the miserable sufferers claim the vigilant care of the legislature.

The delirium of fever and even of *typhus* is not always so low as nosologists mark it; on the contrary, it sometimes occurs with considerable violence; so much so as to induce those who are unacquainted with the nature of diseases, to attribute the symptoms to actual madness. In two cases, the termination of which I witnessed, death probably was the consequence of this error. The subjects in both these cases were servants in families, where probably their continuance would have been highly inconvenient. But were they, merely for this, to be removed at the imminent hazard of their lives; and instead of receiving

ceiving the constant attentions, which such a disease must necessarily demand, be exposed to the coarser diet and treatment, which are employed for the coercion of lunatics who possess powers, morbidly augmented, of suffering hardships. Most certainly not.—They were however thus sent, and perished. Be on your guard in these cases, and consider, that where the burthen has fallen, there, for a time, at least, it ought to remain: do not countenance, therefore, such a removal, but oppose it with those arguments which I am sure will readily occur to you.

On the same principle, I am sure you will oppose the too early removal of females, who unhappily, in a few days after delivering, manifest symptoms of derangement. I have known a removal to a mad-house take place a fortnight after delivery, but surely, at that period, such a change can hardly produce any advantages, to compensate for a loss of those tender attentions, which the poor unfortunate being might be enabled to receive at her

own home. Lest you should suppose these to be errors impossible to be committed, I must state, that just before putting this sheet to press, an additional instance of this misuse of such houses of confinement, occurred to my observation. A man who had been extremely reduced by dysentery with fever, became delirious; he was immediately conveyed to a house for the reception of lunatics. When he arrived there, his extremities were cold, and death so strongly marked in his countenance, that the keeper of the house informed his friends, that his admission was only permitted, lest he should die whilst carrying back, as it was not possible he could live the night out. The most humane attention was paid to him, but he lived only about eight hours.

Another branch of medical jurisprudence may also devolve on you. Your decision may be called for, in those cases where an inquisition is taken, to determine whether life has been

been taken away by the visitation of God, by accident, or by murder. Your duty in this case is a truly solemn one—on the opinion you deliver, the life of a fellow-creature may depend.

Did there exist no other excitement to obtain an accurate anatomical knowledge of the several parts of the human body, both in health and disease; the wish to perform this most solemn duty, without exposing yourself to the stings of self-reproach, would surely be sufficient. But it will be necessary to go a little farther back, on the consideration that you may be applied to, immediately on the fatal injury being inflicted. We will therefore take a review of the two classes of cases, which more particularly call for your exertions in this respect; and will dwell a little on those points, to which your attention should be most applied.

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The case, respecting which we will first enquire, shall be that where poison has been taken into the stomach. If this be known to be the case, and the substance taken be also known, your path is straight before you; you must employ that treatment pointed out by your teachers, as proper on these occasions. But the situation, against the occurrence of which it appears to me most necessary, that your mind should be prepared, is where you are called to a person who has received poison without its being known. Here your discernment may highly raise your estimation; but it may do much more, it may save the lives of two fellow-creatures; or may prevent a cruel murderer from escaping his deserved punishment. If then you be called in where life seems to be fast departing, during a deep sleep, unaccompanied by apoplectic stertor; you may suspect some *narcotic* poison has been employed. Or if the patient is torn, with most excruciating burning pains in the stomach,

mach, accompanied by vomitings of a matter which appears to excoriate as it passes, especially if the pains have come on very suddenly; you may reasonably fear, that some of the *acrid mineral* poisons have been exhibited. In either of these cases, should no appearance of suspicion be discoverable among the friends of the patient, much caution is necessary on your own part.

In the first place, if you see strong ground of suspicion, obtain a knowledge, and, if possible, from the patient himself, what food had been taken just before the pain came on; remark to the bye-standers that the pain might proceed from some error in the preparation of that food, or from its having been kept too long: employ, indeed, any such suggestions, as may allow you, without declaring your suspicion, to obtain a sight of the vessel out of which it had been taken, that you may form a judgment from the remains. If this appears to have been directly, and, as it were, unnecessarily

cessarily cleaned, you will undoubtedly have additional cause for circumspection. But if the vessel be brought, start, if possible, some motive for detaining it in your possession, which may not directly lead to a belief of the nature of your suspicion: thus, say you wish to ascertain whether the doubts you had already stated were well founded; say that you wish to determine, by a simple experiment, whether it may not have been rendered hurtful by having been boiled, in this or that sauce-pan; in a word, say any thing which circumstances will afford you the opportunity of, to account for your detaining it, without giving alarm. Having done every thing which is indicated for your patient, immediately making a careful examination of what you have thus secured, taking notes of what you observe, that you may hereafter employ them, as justice may demand.

The other case, to which we will suppose you to be summoned, we will suppose to be one, where some alarming injury has been inflicted

inflicted by external violence. Here, as in the former case, the first care must, of course, be the performing your professional duty by your patient; the next must be that you render yourself serviceable to society, by preventing the evasion of justice. Your own feelings will influence you beyond any suggestions, which I can employ, as to your conduct when obviously favourable, or even pitiable circumstances plead for him who inflicted the injury. But let not your feelings usurp a judgment, which has no right to influence your conduct, here.—But this we will now pass, and suppose the injury to have been most barbarous, and unprovoked, and the danger imminent. Whilst making your examination, the perpetrator of the horrid deed, ignorant of the extent of the mischief, may be present; or, if the alarming appearance of the wounded man has produced his flight, some friend may be watching to convey your report, that, if it should be unfavourable, he may fly beyond the reach of justice: be, therefore, on your guard; and whatever opinion you deliver to the friends

of the patient, or to the officers of justice, let your public declaration be reserved, and rather of a favourable cast. By this conduct you promote the object of justice, by securing the detention of the assassin.

In every case of this kind, be actuated by the consideration that the lives of others, beside your patient, are at stake; and let this, if any additional inducement can be necessary, urge you, not only, to the adopting of every measure calculated to promote, but to a firm resistance to every proceeding, which may retard his recovery.

Thus suppose it be a case of fracture of the cranium, a compound fracture of any other part, a wound of some important *viscus*, a division of some large blood vessel; or, indeed, any case, where the danger will be increased by his carriage, perhaps through long and rough roads. State this fully to the friends of the patient; and shew both them, and the friends of the delinquents, the necessity of combining

combining in any plan, to any expence they may be able, rather than permit such a removal.

There is more in this caution than may appear, at first sight. With those, who want the power of reasoning, beyond the present moment, it often happens that the question, whether the removal can be *safely* performed—means no more than—can the patient be removed *alive* to the place intended? But it will behove you to make them understand, that, from the irritation of the soft parts, by the jagged ends of the fractured bones; by the agitation of the wounded viscus, or by a fresh hæmorrhage, in cases of doubtful event; even where the probability of life equals that of death; a little additional irritation, or a trifling fresh effusion, may turn the scale, and prove the destruction both of the wounded man, and the delinquent. Call, therefore, on the friends of both; but these may be unable to answer any expence;—call, then, on the parochial officers, to step, perhaps, a little beyond

beyond their line of duty; and implore the aid of the rich and benevolent, thus to save two or more of their fellow-creatures from death, under its most dreadful forms.

It is quite unnecessary for me to state the strong claims, which cases of this kind have on you, for diligence and attention. It only remains for me to recommend you to take, as indeed you should, in every case you are able, regular notes of each days' appearances; and to remind you of the necessity of recording the conduct of the patient and his friends, as to such circumstances as may retard, or prevent a cure. The utility of adopting this mode of proceeding, will, I trust, presently appear.

We will now suppose that, unhappily, your exertions for your patient have failed of success; and will also consider the important task, which it then becomes necessary for you to perform. The Coroner, and the Jury, which he summons to take an inquisition on the body,

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will now require of you a description of the injury, which had been received; the appearances which the body yields, on examination after death; and, lastly, your opinion as to the cause of death; and how far it might be supposed to depend, on the injury which had been suffered. The mere form in which your deposition is made, will be of some consequence. You have to communicate technical observations to men, who are, not only, not professional, but who are frequently extremely illiterate and ignorant. It is therefore required of you to employ the plainest, and most perspicuous language you are able. The questions, indeed, will be put to you by the coroner, and the answers you give may be extremely appropriate to the question, and to the degree of intelligence which the gentleman who fills that office possesses; and will, consequently, be well understood by him. But recollect, whilst asking you questions, he is the organ of the jury; and to the capacities of the jury, you must bring down the language of your evidence. Use, therefore, no more

technical terms than are absolutely necessary; and explain these, as you go on; and, even, to prevent the possibility of any juryman forming, in consequence of not fully understanding you, an opinion, different from that which your evidence warrants, declare your willingness to explain any part, which might not be fully understood by any of the jurymen.

In the first place, you will describe the state of the patient when you was first called to him, and give a particular account of the apparent injury, and the symptoms which at first appeared. You will then deliver, if required, an account of the symptoms which supervened, and of the various circumstances which occurred during his illness; and, lastly, make your inference as to the cause of the death. Guided by the notes you may have taken, you will, no doubt, perform this task with full satisfaction; I have only to remark, in passing, that you should be careful to avoid every thing superfluous, not admitting a single word

word that does not bear a strict relationship to the question before the court.

With respect to the latter part of your task, much consideration will frequently be necessary, before you attempt to accomplish it. Those who have not revolved in their mind the duties of a medical man, in this case, would be likely to believe, that all that could be asked of him might be summed up in this one question—Was the injury received the cause of the death? But you will not find the question thus narrowed, when put by a gentleman of intelligence and discernment, acting in his judicial capacity: he will employ that patient and zealous investigation, which I cannot avoid the opportunity of, even thus digressively, saying, marks the conduct of the present worthy Coroner of the County of Middlesex. He will require to be informed, as nearly as possible, how much is to be attributed to the blow, wound, &c. and how much to other causes. You will find it necessary to determine, whether the injury was from the first, in itself,

mortal, or rather incurable, or not. If you shall be under the necessity of answering this question in the affirmative, the object of your examination is completed. But we may suppose this not to be the case; and that the injury, not in itself such as would have occasioned death, to have acted in conjunction with other causes, in producing this lamentable termination. These causes, of necessity, should become with you objects of close consideration, before you deliver that opinion respecting them, on which so much depends.

The first point on which your mind should dwell, should be the previous state of the deceased; endeavouring to ascertain whether there existed any disease, or any other particular circumstance, which might render him more susceptible than another, of that particular injury which the parts has sustained. Thus a most respectable lecturer, in this metropolis, was describing to his pupils, on the dead subject, the mode of employing the trefine; he had just began to turn the instrument,

ment, with great caution, apprising them of the necessity of taking great care, lest the instrument should slip, when the instrument absolutely did slip into the brain up to the handle. The skull, being afterwards examined, proved to be very little thicker than strong card. Now consider, how trifling a blow might have occasioned the death of this man; such a blow, indeed, as might have been inflicted without the most distant intention of seriously injuring him. To neglect observing such a circumstance, and to omit calling the attention of the jury to it, would be, in the highest degree, culpable. The jury, it is to be remembered, are to determine on the intention of the act; and, in ordinary cases, so much violence is required to effect a fracture of the skull, as to lead them, almost certainly, to infer, that a blow, inflicted with such a degree of force, must have been intended to destroy. This, however, would be a case, in which such an inference would be highly improper: and, calling their attention to the circumstance, could not but have a proper

effect on their verdict. What has been here said will, you must see, apply to numerous other cases, where, from disease, peculiarity of conformation, &c. unexpected injuries proceed from comparatively small causes.

The next subject of enquiry should be, whether the injury, in itself curable, had been rendered fatal by any misconduct of the patient, or of those who wished to assist him. Suppose a case of simple fracture of the leg, and that, instead of conveying the patient, in the easiest mode, on a litter, &c. he should have been placed in a cart, and carried several miles on a rugged road; and that, on his arrival, at his place of destination, the simple fracture should have been rendered a compound one, and the added mischief have been so great, that mortification soon succeeded. In this case, it will be for you, faithfully to describe the nature of the additional injury, and how far the death of the patient was thereto attributable.

In other cases, also, such opposition to the orders of the surgeon might, on enquiry, be detected, as would most plainly manifest, that death was attributable to the misconduct of the patient, or of his pretended friends, rather than to him who inflicted the blow. Thus, a man receives a slight penetrating wound in the belly, and his surgeon conveys him home to his bed with care; takes blood freely from him, and enjoins the strictest rest, and abstinence from every thing which can possibly irritate. He sees him pass two or three days, without the least pain, or the smallest appearance of danger; but is afterwards called to him, and finds severe peritoneal inflammation has come on, which, he being unable to subdue, terminates in death. On enquiry he learns, that, after quitting him the day before, his patient had, on the earnest solicitations of his friends, sat up, or even walked out; and, on the idea of restoring his strength, had eaten freely of rich and heating food, and had even indulged freely in drinking spirituous liquors: acting completely contrary to his

orders, in every respect. I need not, I am sure, point out to you the necessity of impressing, on the minds of the jury, the quantity of mischief which must have been produced, by this direct opposition to your directions. I only mean to warn you of the possibility of such an occurrence, and to induce you, in such a case, to employ the utmost vigilance to detect such culpable misconduct.

Let us again suppose, that, in consequence of a blow, a rib is broken; and that, application being made to a surgeon, he enjoins rest and a plan, by an attention to which there is every reason to suppose that all danger must be prevented. But instead of complying with the directions which are given, the patient is seen almost constantly reeling about the street: exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, and all the injuries to which a drunken man is liable; until severe inflammation of the lungs, or pleura is produced, which terminates in death. Such a case is very likely

likely to happen—you will, therefore, be very particular in your enquiries as to the conduct of the deceased, after the accident, and deliver a faithful report of the result to the jury; that they may be enabled, clearly to ascertain, with whom the charge of murder should rest.

We have now to attend to a case, in which it is solemnly required of you to be on your guard, that no partial, or interested consideration should, in the least, affect the report you will have to make.—Suppose an injury inflicted, and that all is done which appears to be indicated; but that death supervenes; and that, on examining the body after death, it appears not only that, by a different mode of treatment, the patient would have been saved, but that death is actually attributable to the adopting of improper treatment. The possibility of such a circumstance happening, and even without leaving room for censure on the part of the surgeon, will easily be supposed, by those who know the ambiguous symptoms which

which may arise, the deception which may proceed from an unexpected and indeterminable direction of a wound, and from numerous other causes. However little it might be merited, we well know that the mouth of the multitude would be now immediately opened to procure the ruin of him, whom it, in its wisdom, had deemed ignorant; and that weak minds should be influenced, by this consideration, is far from being to be wondered at. To declare to a jury, that the fatal termination proceeds from your misconception of the case, might, indeed, materially injure your character; and, if the error was another's, the declaration might be esteemed invidious and malignant. But those principles of justice, which, I confidently trust, are indelibly imprinted on your mind, could never allow you, when the life, or the ignominious death of a fellow-creature, depends on your evidence, to omit the smallest circumstance which might weigh in his favour, with the court which is to judge him. To relate *the whole of the truth, and nothing but the truth*, you are solemnly

solemnly sworn to; and this, I well know, will be sufficient to induce you to deliver your evidence, with the utmost precision and circumspection. Let those remember, whom these considerations do not affect, that their present deposition may be revised in another court, compared with the evidence they then may give, and with the facts which may be detailed by others; and, that the whole of their evidence will be strictly scrutinized by ingenious and acute counsel.

Before I quit this part of my address, I must say a few words on those melancholy cases, where it falls to your lot, to deliver your opinion on the sane, or insane state of mind, of those who have destroyed themselves. To deter others from the commission of a similar act, the law orders, you know, a sentence which can only affect the innocent, and, perhaps, already almost distracted, relatives. I will not dwell on the severity, nor the injustice of the law, in this case; but, on the contrary, allow it may have some slight effects,

in

in preventing others from thus dreadfully, and indignantly, throwing back the gift of life.

But certainly, I cannot err, in reminding you, that it is one of the most important moments of your life, when it is portioned to you, to deliver a judgment on which depends a sentence, so painfully afflicting, to a lamenting widow, or, perhaps, to a family of weeping, innocent and destitute orphans. Then will it behove you seriously to ponder, before you perform the, almost sacred, office allotted to you. It would not become me to ask you, to permit your mind to dwell on the sufferings which would agonize those, who would have to undergo the dreadful knowledge, that the remains of him they held most dear were exposed to the most brutal and ignominious violence:—it is, on the contrary, necessary, that I should urge you to the performance of your duty. At least, however, I must be permitted to remark to you, thus becoming, by the opinion you deliver, a judge of your fellow-creature, that such is the frailty of human

human nature, that the best of men dare not to ask for justice for their deeds, unless it be tempered with mercy;—that mercy that you cannot but crave for yourself, be ready, then, to shew to others.

Of course you will inquire, whether long and settled habits of melancholy had manifested themselves, and without cause; if so, the symptoms of disordered mind would surely be sufficiently manifest to you. But the act may have immediately succeeded some great misfortune; the sudden reduction from affluence to distress, the loss of a beloved object, &c. In these cases, even though the poor creature, an hour before, evinced signs of fully possessing his mental powers, can you pretend to say, that the act was not committed during a fit of frenzy, whilst suffering pangs to the utmost stretch of human endurance.

Surely there can be no risque in imputing so dreadful an action, to the sudden deprivation of reason, from the poignant sufferings, proceeding

ceeding from being thus suddenly plunged into poverty, and exposed to the mock pity, and to the contempt, of the foolish and unfeeling. Surely there can be but little room to suppose, that reason can retain any influence on one thus unexpectedly sunk in misery, deprived of every earthly comfort, without a ray of hope to enlighten the distant prospect; and unpossessed of these religious assurances, which have been found so powerful a stay in the moments of distress. The horrid action may indeed have been leisurely and systematically planned; every other action, from the moment of forming the dreadful resolution, may have been regularly in unison with this intention, and even cunning may have marked every part of the plan. But have you not to suspect, that the determination on such a plan ought to be considered, as a mark of impaired judgment, and of derangement of intellect. Do we not well know, that the lunatic will often, abating one train of ideas, reason and converse, without the least appearance of inconsistency; and will, with the utmost ingenuity,

nuity, make every circumstance incline to, and accord with, the grand and predominant object of his disordered fancy!

I cannot here point out particular cases; they must be left to your own cautious judgment. I can only intreat you, in every case, where the lives, or the sufferings of your fellow-creatures, depend on your opinion, to deliver it with that caution, for which the awfulness of the case calls; and to resolve to promote justice, but to incline to mercy.

Anxiously hoping these observations, which an eagerness for your welfare has prompted me to lay before you, may prove of advantage; and most fervently wishing, that your studies may prove a source of comfort and happiness to you, and to those who place in you their trust and confidence.

I am, your's, ——

FINIS.

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